







# IN THE HIMALAYAS

Photo by the Author

"We ascended the steep mountain path, through forests of Himalayan oak and rhododendron, crossing range after range of jagged peaks and deep gorges." *—*

# INDIA AND HER PEOPLES

BY

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*"Talks on African Villages," etc.*

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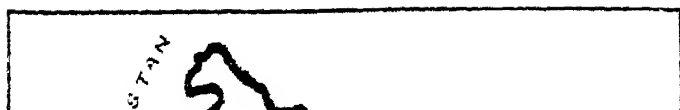
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## PREFACE

THIS book has been written, at the request of the United Council for Missionary Education, for a special purpose. For some years thousands of teachers and workers among young people have been using the publications of the United Council as material for missionary lessons—"Talks," "Yarns," "Heroines," "Story Lessons," and the text-books prepared specially for missionary Study Circles. All these books deal directly with missionary work and opportunity. The need has now arisen for a new series of books dealing, not with missions, but with the countries in which missionaries work and with the peoples to whom they seek to present the Gospel message. This little volume therefore is the first of a new series; others will follow dealing with China, Africa and other lands.

The book seeks to give such information as will create in the mind of the teacher a picture of India and her peoples. It aims at a vivid, picturesque presentation of some of the outstanding facts of Indian life, and there may be others besides teachers who will find it useful as an introductory study. The writer was asked to keep specially in mind those readers who are studying India for the first time; so *India and her Peoples* assumes no preliminary knowledge of the subject. The material is drawn very largely from the author's personal experiences and very extensive memoranda made during a 7000-mile tour through India in 1920-21. Every possible opportunity has been taken to test the accuracy



India and Her Peoples.

NOTE

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Those who read this book in Groups are strongly recommended to make use of the "Questions for Discussion" that have been prepared in connection with it. They may be obtained by writing to the Home Educational Secretary at any of the above addresses marked \*.

# INDIA AND HER PEOPLES

## CHAPTER I

### THE LAND OF THE HINDUS

THE Victoria Station in Bombay is probably the finest railway terminus in the world—a great Italian-Gothic pile, richly decorated with open arcades and porches, and surmounted by handsome towers and pinnacles and domes, a building that for size and external grace may easily put to shame many of the royal palaces of Europe.

But the visitor newly arrived from home is less impressed with the station building than with the people who gather there. In the large third-class waiting hall some scores of Indians, in bewildering assortment of dress and undress, are sitting in groups or lying asleep on the floor. Some of them are pilgrims going to bathe in “Mother Ganges”; others are just ordinary coolies (labourers) wearing only a narrow loin cloth and turban, and there are several khaki-clad Indian soldiers returning home from Mesopotamia—stalwart black-bearded Sikhs, or smart little Ghurkas. Walk round among these representatives of India’s 320 millions of people, and you will detect at least a dozen of the 150 different languages spoken within her borders.

At the booking-office a wealthy Parsi merchant is taking a first-class ticket; two or three of his servants look after the luggage, and his wife, a timid-eyed lady wrapped in a beautiful *sari* of pink silk bordered with

narrow black velvet richly embroidered, holds their little child by the hand. A baggy-trousered Afghan moneylender is pouring out a torrent of Hindustani over the head of an Anglo-Indian<sup>1</sup> guard; probably he is asking about a train for Peshawar on the North-West Frontier—a three days' journey if he goes by the "Punjab Mail" or much longer if he can only afford to travel by the slower "passenger" train. Two Bengali students, with big blue shawls thrown round their shoulders, stroll down the platform holding each other by the hand in a way that suggests young lovers. As they enter a second-class carriage, a burly Marathi corn dealer is arranging his belongings for the journey; one of his servants is piling up three or four small tin trunks, almost blocking the compartment, while another is spreading out his master's *bhista* (bedding) on one of the long couches. A pair of brown legs and bare feet hang down from the upper sleeping berth—a pundit (learned Brahmin), going to Benares, has captured that shelf-like retreat, and is re-arranging his turban and counting over his change. As the time of departure draws near, more passengers saunter up the platform and try to squeeze their way into the already full carriages. Most of them seem to be liberally supplied with trunks and bundles of bedding, which the noisy coolies try to push in through the carriage windows should the doorways be already blocked. A British officer in khaki uniform and two young civilians have taken possession of a "First," while an important-looking Indian gentleman in European clothes enters another: he is one of His Majesty's judges, and has a number of well-dressed

<sup>1</sup> The term "Anglo-Indian" is now used, instead of the old word "Eurasian," to denote a descendant from a European on the one side and an Asiatic on the other.

servants in attendance upon him. There is no mistaking yonder party with the blue-uniformed official: Cook's tourists are familiar the world over! And now the guard is waving the train off—he, like the engine-driver, is an Anglo-Indian, dressed in white drills and wearing a pith *topee* (sun helmet). This train is the "mail," timed to reach Calcutta (a distance of 1349 miles) in forty-eight hours. It is possible to take many equally long journeys in India, for the country is 1900 miles from west to east and as many from north to south. Its total area is more than thirty times that of England and Wales.

#### The Varied Scenery of India

Few countries possess so great a variety of scenery as India. It boasts the highest mountains in the world, and, by way of contrast, has dull uninteresting plains over which one may journey for days together with little in the way of scenery to break the monotony. The tiger-infested jungles of Bengal, with their tangled undergrowth, contrast sharply with the sandy deserts of Sindh and Rajputana. The parched uplands of the Deccan are often waterless at the very time the north-eastern monsoon is flooding the rice fields of the Madras Presidency. From the tropical loveliness of Travancore one may pass in a few hours to the bold rocky heights of the Western Ghats. These varied features seldom intermingle. They are distinct, separate—so much so, indeed, as to give the visitor the impression that he is passing through several countries rather than one country.

India is vast, but its physical features are, in the main, singularly simple, and they can be easily indicated by

a few bold splashes of chalk on an outline map. There are, roughly, four clearly-marked regions,<sup>1</sup> viz.—

- (1) The great mountain chains of the Himalayas and adjacent ranges, that form an almost unbroken wall around the entire northern frontier.
- (2) South of the mountains are vast plains stretching across the country from east to west, watered by the Ganges and Indus with their numerous tributaries.
- (3) South again is the high triangular tableland of the Deccan, which forms the chief feature of the Indian peninsula.
- (4) Below the tableland, on its eastern and western sides, are fertile coast plains that separate it from the sea.

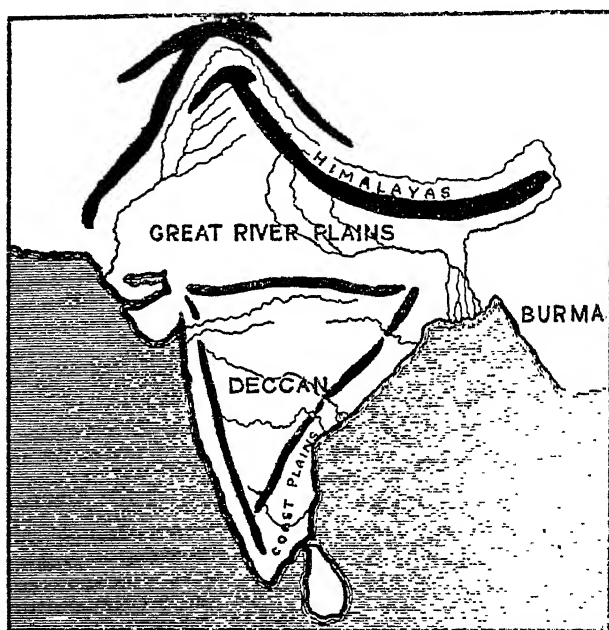
These great regions, so diverse in character, have each a charm of their own, and seen under the ever-changing conditions of the grey dawn, the midday glare, the golden light of evening, or the splendour of the moonlight, they all contribute to the unique fascination of this wonderful land. It may help the reader to grasp the main features of India if we take a brief glance at each of these four regions in turn.

#### (1) The Northern Mountains

The great ranges that shut off India from the rest of Asia form a mighty wall more than 2000 miles in length, rising sharply from the level plain of Hindustan. The principal chain—the snow-capped Himalayas, “the

<sup>1</sup> Burma, though politically a province of India and directly under the Viceroy and Government of India, is an entirely separate country, different in every way from India proper. It does not lie within the scope of this book.

Abode of Snow"—has an average height of about four miles, a double wall of rock and ice. From this gigantic rampart rise majestic peaks, the chief of which, Everest (29,000 feet), is the highest mountain in the world. Clad with a mantle of eternal snow, this great peak has defied the skill and endurance of explorers, and its sky-piercing



MAP OF INDIA, SHOWING THE FOUR DIVISIONS

summit, nearly six miles high, has never been scaled. So recently as 1921, a well-equipped expedition, after attempting to ascend from all four sides, was baffled by the blinding snow-storms to which those high altitudes are subject. Mortal man is powerless in the presence of the whirling masses of snow that guard the icy precipices around Mount Everest, and the party was obliged



to abandon the struggle.<sup>1</sup> Yet Everest is but one of a great number of snowy monarchs that rise high above the main range. Between those silent untrodden heights are huge glaciers, one of which is known to be more than sixty miles in length. From these glaciers are born great rivers which break through the inaccessible fastnesses and force their way down deep valleys to the plains.

The Himalayan scenery is unrivalled. It is a never-to-be-forgotten experience to be carried up from the plains in *dandies* on the shoulders of the hardy hill-men. The writer and his sister on one occasion, escorted by fourteen bare-footed mountaineers, ascended the steep mountain path, through forests of Himalayan oak and rhododendron—blazing with colour in the spring-time—crossing range after range of foothills, skirting precipices, and from time to time getting wondrous views of the valleys below or of the heights above. Our bearers, sure-footed as mountain goats, carried us up winding paths that seemed impossible, and deep ravines opened at our feet. Here and there a tiny village seemed to hang on to the mountain-side in the far distance, and we marked the dens of leopards by the forest path. On reaching higher altitudes, a turn of the path opened out a view that awed us to silence—a wondrous panorama of mountain ranges rising one above another in succeeding terraces, separated by deep, mysterious valleys. And, high above all, the majestic snows of the central range of the Himalayas stretched across the sky—a tossing sea of giant peaks, separated by glaciers and ice fields, interspersed with lofty walls of bare rock, so precipitous as to afford no lodgment for the snow. The profound silence was broken only by the cry of some large bird

<sup>1</sup> While these pages are passing through the press, another attempt is being made to reach the summit of Everest.

that soared slowly in the awe-inspiring abyss at our feet. It was the hour of sunset. The vast chasms below were dark and gloomy; only the rugged mountain-tops caught the golden light, while the snowy heights above flushed pink against the glowing sky. As the shadows deepened, and all around was bathed in mysterious twilight, the great peaks glowed crimson until they seemed to be on fire. Too soon the glory faded, and only the cold silvery snows remained visible in the gathering night. *A similar scene might have been witnessed from any point for a thousand miles!*

On the bleak mountain-sides, beneath the snowy ranges, are tiny villages—lonely and isolated from the great world. The sturdy mountaineer builds his simple dwelling of stone, and roofs it with beams stout enough to resist the snows of winter. In it, he and his family must find shelter from the piercing blasts for four dreary months. Between December and March they are absolutely cut off from the outer world, and pass the time in wood carving, in preparing the skins of animals they have trapped, or in embroidering their own garments. In the smoky dwelling, with their goat-skins wrapped around them, they sit on the floor around the little fire and gossip as they smoke their hookahs (pipes) and chew *pan*. By the dim light of clay lamps they make new clothes or repair the old ones, and sometimes the process is accompanied by the hum of a Singer sewing machine—a treasure carried up from the plain by some member of the family, who, in the bazaars of the town, has sold his carvings or skin rugs to advantage.

As the winter draws to its close, and the store of fuel and food is almost exhausted, the villagers come forth from their dwellings. Soon the snows melt under the warm rays of the spring sun, and the people prepare

the gardens they have cut one above another in narrow terraces along the steep hill-side. With the simplest of implements they till the soil and sow their seed. Then the men and boys, staff in hand, journey across mountains and valleys to the nearest hill-station to sell their handiwork, or to get employment as carriers or as servants with some of the Europeans who flock thither in April and May to escape from the burning heat of the plains. When "the season" is over, the hill-men spend their earnings on such things as they need or fancy, and then tramp back to their distant homes, travelling over the mountains in companies for mutual protection, for the solitary traveller, while he slept, might be attacked by some dangerous beast, or his throat might be cut by some mountain robbers. On reaching home, the crops are gathered, and preparations are made for the winter that will shortly close in. Thus the years come and go, with but little to mark their passage, save that the children grow bigger, and the brown faces of the parents begin to wrinkle and their black hair to grow white.

## (2) The Great River Plains

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than one experiences on passing from the mountains to the monotonous plains that stretch almost without a break from Eastern Bengal to the Afghan frontier. They lack anything that is worthy to be called scenery. The great rivers—the Ganges with its tributaries the Jumna and the Gogra, the Indus and the rivers of the Punjab—have no natural beauty, and from their low sandy banks stretch vast cultivated plains, green enough after the rains, but soon becoming brown and dusty under the fierce rays of the sun. The mud villages are unlovely, and almost the only relief is found in the splendid avenues

of trees—banyan and mango, neem and Indian oak, that line the great highways. Occasionally one sees a solitary date-palm, but even a palm tree does not make scenery. In Bengal, however, the country becomes more attractive; masses of pampas grass, and clumps of giant bamboo—often sixty or seventy feet high—and the beautiful green foliage of the plantain and the feathery coco-nut palm are a welcome relief. In April and May the heat is intense—sometimes reaching 115 degrees in the shade—and even in the so-called “cold weather” the very phrase seems a mockery to the perspiring tourist.

Yet these hot, dusty plains are the most densely populated part of India. The villages are almost uncountable. Numerous towns and a few large cities attract the visitor by their narrow streets and oriental bazaars. Delhi and Agra, Muttra and Jeypore, Ajmere and Alwar, Allahabad and Benares, with their ancient forts and marble palaces, their carved temples and splendid mosques, their shining domes and lofty minarets more than compensate for the lack of natural beauty. Here and there a ridge of rock, rising precipitously from the plain, is crowned with the ruins of some oft-besieged stronghold. Where a sacred river flows past some famous city, its margin is lined with stone steps and terraces crowded with Hindu pilgrims who have come to bathe in the soul-cleansing waters. Ever and anon the skyline is broken by a graceful minaret that bears witness to the Moslem faith. Almost every acre is historic ground. And these populous plains, rather than the glorious Himalayas, are the real India.

As the train rushes across the country, one may see from the carriage windows the *ryot* (small cultivator) ploughing with his oxen—or possibly with camels—in the same primitive way that his fathers ploughed hundreds,

or even thousands, of years ago; and he is using a primitive wooden plough similar to the one they used. Or perchance, according to the time of year, he may be carrying his seed in a basket of dry palm-leaf, scattering it as he walks over the newly made furrows. Or perhaps it is harvest time, and the millet or barley is being cut with a primitive sickle and borne in big lumbering carts to the thrashing floors. In the burning heat of midday the people are usually seen resting under the welcome shade of trees or bushes.

These simple agriculturists toil in their fields from sunrise to sunset to earn a bare livelihood. They are accustomed to the intense heat but they are not proof against it, and they suffer a good deal from exhaustion, especially in times of drought and sickness; and many of them are nearly always underfed. There may not be the rush and hustle that we who live in cold climates are accustomed to, but they work steadily on at their appointed task until the night cometh when no man can work. After all, one cannot see the real life of the people from the windows of an express train. Those who have gone in and out among the villages and have paused to watch the men toiling at the irrigation wells, the women and children labouring ankle-deep in water in the rice fields, and boys and girls of quite tender age undertaking the responsibility of tending the cattle—in short, those who know anything of the daily struggle for existence, will never bring a sweeping accusation of laziness against the Indian *ryot*.

### (3) The Deccan

South of the great plains rise ranges of mountains—the Vindhya and Central Indian Hills—that separate South India from the North. They also form the base

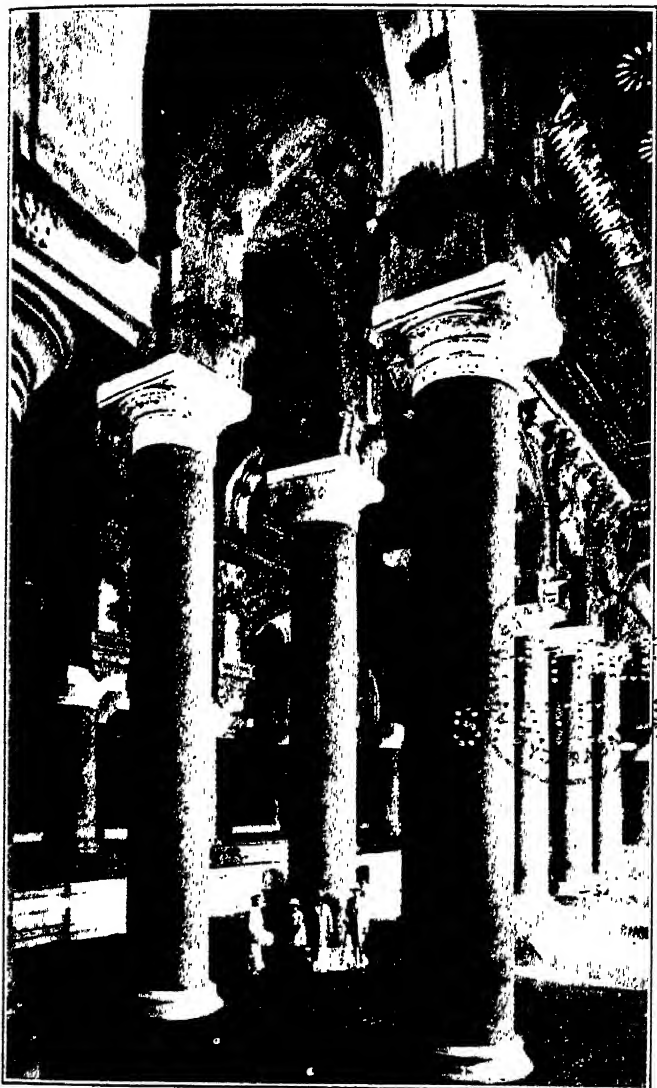


Photo by the Author

### ONE OF INDIA'S MAGNIFICENT PALACES

*The entrance portico to the old palace of the Naik kings, at Madura, South India. It was built by a Hindu Raja, Tirumala Naik (A.D. 1623-59).*



of the huge inverted triangle of the Deccan, an elevated plateau which occupies the greater part of the Indian peninsula. This wide tableland averages from 2000 to 3000 feet above sea-level. Its apex points due south, and its sides are buttressed by the mountain ranges of the Eastern and Western Ghats. It includes two of the largest of the self-governing Indian States—the dominions of His Highness the Nizam of Haidarabad—and His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

Considerable areas of the Deccan are liable to frequent and prolonged drought; the rivers and tanks dry up, the earth becomes hard as iron, and gaunt famine stalks through the villages. But more ground has lately been brought under cultivation, and important irrigation works in some districts increase the fertility of the soil. There are wide stretches of jungle, sometimes thick forest with tangled undergrowth in which the tiger has his lair and the python lurks, but more often open jungle—great plains covered with cactus and aloes and prickly-pear, strewn with masses of rock and with big granite boulders, piled up fantastically as though by giant hands. In such places leopards abound, and he who would climb those rock-strewn hills must beware of bears; while in the denser jungles British officers and Indian princes organize tiger hunts on a large scale. The scenery, on the whole, is less monotonous than in the northern river plains, and one often comes across stretches of real beauty, where rocks and date-palms stand in picturesque combination against a background of bare hills crowned with some ancient castle.

#### (4) The Southern Coast Plains

In South India, between the Deccan and the sea, lie plains that vary from a few miles in width (on the west)



to a hundred or two hundred miles on the south-east. A tremendous rainfall unites with the blazing sun to give tropical fertility to these plains.

On the western coast, the State of Travancore is one of the loveliest parts of India. Its "backwaters" and lagoons are fringed with luxuriant groves of coco-nut palms and broad-leaved plantains (bananas) which recall the beauties of Ceylon. In this lovely region there dwell an Indian people who are not true Indians—the Syrian Christians, who form not less than a quarter of the population of the State of Travancore. They are the descendants of Syrians who, in the early centuries of the Christian era, journeyed from Antioch in Syria and made this land their home. They have their own bishops and priests, their own liturgies and the Scriptures in their ancient Syriac tongue, and many very ancient church buildings—several of which may be a thousand years old. These Syrian Christians number nearly three quarters of a million. On this western coast of India also is the country of the Moplahs. They too are strangers, whose forefathers came from Arabia in the seventh century. A wild race they were when they came from their distant homeland, and a wild race they are to this day. This region is famous for its pepper and chillies, its ginger and cinnamon, and for its beautiful coco-nut groves—all of which are an important source of revenue to the land-owners and cultivators. Farther inland there are vast forests from which teak and sandalwood are obtained; and on the hills beyond are tea estates, providing employment for large numbers of coolies.

On the eastern side of the peninsula, practically all the land is under cultivation. The brilliant green rice-fields are often fringed with rows of stiff-looking palmyra-palms, and the whole country is strewn with villages.

There are innumerable wayside shrines, and one occasionally catches sight of the lofty towers of some vast temple; for this is essentially the land of great temples with high walls and many towers and spacious courts.

These fertile southern lowlands lie entirely within the tropics, and cold weather is unknown—the temperature is only varied by different degrees of heat.

. . . . .

We have now taken a bird's-eye view—may we say “an aeroplane view”?—of India. We have seen something of her mountains and her plains, her vastness and her variety. In these things the tourist and the lover of nature may revel. But to the closer observer the great charm of India is her people rather than her geographical features. To visit India is to be fascinated by her, and to know her people is to love them.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMING OF GREAT PEOPLES

#### The Dim Past

IF India is a museum of scenery, it is even more "a museum of races," for through long ages successive waves of invasion have constantly brought new peoples into the land.

It is not difficult to picture what India must have been like in the dim past. Long before the dawn of history, the land was covered with great forests and vast stretches of jungle, and a few scattered tribes maintained a precarious existence. Among the hills the simple people would dwell in such caves as they could secure against the attacks of wild beasts. On the plains they would make primitive huts and fortify them as best they could against their inveterate foes, the leopard and the tiger.

Many of the primitive tribes were nomadic, moving from place to place in search of food and safety, and ascending to the higher ground when the torrential rains flooded the plains. At sundown they would light their watch-fires to keep wild beasts at bay, and their rest would be broken by the night noises of the jungle. The loud chorus of frogs or crickets, the dismal howl of jackals, and the chattering of monkeys, would form the background for the deeper voice of the dreaded tiger. Then, as the first glow of dawn stilled the noises of the night, the people would draw their scanty skin-

garments about them and prepare for the struggle of another day. With their flint-headed arrows they would hunt the fawn drinking unsuspectingly by the jungle pool, or they would set traps for larger game whose skins would provide comfort for the chilly nights of December and January. Moving to new places, they would carry the family fire with them. Life must have been one prolonged struggle for existence; and many of those primitive people would fall victims to the relentless feline foes who would spring upon them as they dozed by the dying embers of their watch-fires, or to the deadly snakes they would tread upon in long grass.

Then, long before the dawn of history, through the wild mountain passes of the North-West, there came a people of higher civilization—the Dravidians. We know practically nothing of the time or the manner of their coming, but in course of centuries they spread across the land, and the older inhabitants retired before them, taking refuge in the hill and jungle fastnesses, where their descendants still exist as primitive "jungle tribes"—the Bhils, Kols, Santals, Todas and others.

. . . . .

Meanwhile, peoples of very different origin were pressing slowly into India from the far East—Mongolian tribes, people of yellowish skin and narrow eyes, of the same stock as the Chinese. Entering from what is now China, they kept to the valleys and foothills of the Himalayas, peopling what are now the mountain states of Nepal and Bhutan. Others turned southwards into Burma and became the Burmese. Still others, following the Brahmaputra river into Bengal, settled in the great delta and, intermarrying with the Dravidians, formed the Bengal race of to-day.

### The Coming of the Aryans

Some fifteen centuries before Christ, came the greatest invasion of all. Singing hymns in praise of their bright gods, and driving before them their flocks and herds, the strong, vigorous Aryan peoples journeyed from their ancestral home in Central Asia and poured through the rugged mountain passes into the land destined to become their holy land.

As the new invaders emerged from the gloomy defiles into the well-watered Punjab ("the Land of Five Rivers"), they settled down after their long wanderings. They cultivated the land, and in time their temporary settlements grew into permanent villages. They regarded themselves as the "Noble Ones" (Aryans), and the darker-skinned Dravidians as vastly inferior. There was much fighting to be done, and many no doubt gave themselves to a military life. Slowly the conquerors pushed their way eastward, pressing the Dravidians across the Vindhya Hills into the great peninsula, which their descendants still occupy—the Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam peoples of to-day.

### The Religion of the Early Aryans

The early Aryan settlers in the Punjab had no temples, no idols, no priests. Yet they were a singularly devout people, and every man built an altar, offered daily sacrifice, and sang hymns to the friendly gods. Their faith was largely nature-worship. They were impressed with the golden dawn, the powerful midday sun, the dark thunder cloud, the mysterious sacrificial fire; and these phenomena were, in the thoughts of the devout Aryans, clothed with the attributes of divinity. The Sun god, the Storm gods, the goddess of Dawn, the god of Fire came to be revered as powerful divinities; hymns

were composed to them, and they received regular worship. The people gazed in wonder towards the snow-capped Himalayas—what more fitting place could there be for the abode of the gods than those dazzling, stupendous heights? Their vivid fancy peopled the inaccessible fastnesses with divinities, and they bowed before them in awe and worship. And whence the great rivers that flowed from those eternal snows? Came they not from the very throne of the gods? Thus the rivers also began to be revered as divine.

As time passed, certain men specialized in religion, and these gradually developed into a recognized priesthood, which by a slow but inevitable process gathered to itself all the rights and powers of offering sacrifice. These men became known as Brahmins, and thus the Brahmin or priestly "caste" became paramount in religious authority and privilege.

#### The Sacred Hymns

The Brahmins were the natural guardians of the sacred hymns. Some of the more ancient hymns were no doubt brought from the far-off ancestral home; but from time to time new ones were composed. There was no writing in those days, and we owe it to the Brahmins that the hymns were preserved. In their schools the hymns were committed to memory, and in this way were transmitted from one generation to another. Not even the punctuation was lost. As early as 600 B.C. we find the theological schools carefully counting every verse, every word, and even every syllable of the hymns, in order to protect them from alteration. The 1028 hymns of the *Rig Veda* were declared to contain 10,622 verses, 153,826 words, and 432,000 syllables. Marvellous indeed were the memories

that for centuries preserved this ancient lore until it could be committed to writing !

These Vedic hymns were expressions of genuine piety and devotion, and amid much that is commonplace and feeble, we find real gems of thought. Here is a verse from the *Atharva Veda* (iv. 16) :—

The mighty Varuna, who rules above, looks down  
Upon the world, His kingdom, as if close at hand.  
When men imagine they do aught by stealth, He knows it.  
No one can stand, or walk, or softly glide along,  
Or hide in dark recess or lurk in secret cell,  
But Varuna detects him, and his movement spies.  
Two persons may devise some plot, together sitting,  
And think themselves alone ; but He, the King, is there—  
A Third—and sees it all. His messengers descend  
Countless from His abode, for ever traversing  
This world, and scanning with a thousand eyes its inmates.  
Whate'er exists within this earth, and all within the sky,  
Yea, all that is beyond, King Varuna perceives.  
The winking of men's eyes are numbered all by Him.  
He wields this universe as gamesters handle dice.

This great God Varuna is said to be “merciful to him who has committed sin” (*Rig Veda* vii. 87), and we can imagine the worshippers standing around the altar, singing while the sacrifice was offered :—

Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay,  
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !  
If I go trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind ;  
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !  
Through want of strength, thou strong bright god, have I gone  
wrong ;  
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !  
Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the  
heavenly host,  
Whenever we break Thy law through thoughtlessness ;  
Punish us not, O God, for that offence !  
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !

(*Rig Veda*, vii. 89.)

As the hymns were sung, offerings of *ghee* (clarified butter), curdled milk, rice, cakes, and the juice of the soma plant were laid upon the altar. The fire consumed the gifts and carried them to the gods. Thus the fire is described as :—

A messenger, conveying to the sky  
Our hymns and offerings.

And the fire, too, came to be regarded as a mighty god. Animal sacrifices were also presented : sheep, goats, bulls, buffaloes, and—most powerful of all—horses.

### The Rise of Buddhism

While the Brahmins were developing a very elaborate ritual, other men of religious temperament devoted themselves to an ascetic life, retiring to the jungles to torture themselves. An early record mentions forty methods of self-mortification. Still other men gave themselves to meditation, and retired to lonely places that they might solve the riddle of the universe—of man's existence and destiny, and the mystery of suffering. They developed complex systems of philosophy, and prepared the way for the philosophic schools of later ages.

From among these lonely thinkers in the jungles came one of the greatest religious teachers of the world—the Buddha. Born in the sixth century B.C., he was burdened with the problem of suffering, and after many years of self-torture and meditations he received what he believed to be the key to the riddle. As "the Enlightened One" (the Buddha) he gathered disciples around him, and his doctrines spread through India. The great Emperor Asoka (272-232 B.C.) made Buddhism the official religion of the State, and sent missionaries to carry it to Ceylon and other distant lands.



But Brahminism was only eclipsed, not crushed ; after a struggle of several centuries it overcame its rival, and by A.D. 900 Buddhism had died out in the land of its birth. There are no Buddhists in India to-day.<sup>1</sup>

### The Corruption of the Ancient Faith

In their efforts to regain their supremacy, the Brahmins succeeded in drawing into their fold the great Dravidian peoples. To make conversion easier, the Brahmins allowed them to bring their own tribal gods with them, and places were found for them in the Brahminical system. For instance : in Western India, Krishna, a long-dead chieftain, was worshipped by the non-Aryan people ; so he was declared to be an incarnation of the old Brahmin god Vishnu. In the same way Kali, a dread goddess of Bengal, was proclaimed to be the wife of Siva. Thus the non-Aryan gods and peoples were united to the great Aryan faith and this conglomerate religion is called "Hinduism." But in widening its influence, the old Vedic religion lost its purity. Idols were introduced, and all manner of corruptions crept in.

As the centuries passed, temples were built or were carved out of the solid rock—no rock temples in the world can compare with those of India. Of the stone-built temples, the earlier ones were small, but kings rebuilt or enlarged them, and other kings added outer courts. Thus, in South India, what were at first comparatively small shrines were surrounded with courts, until they now cover very large areas—usually nearly square—with enormous walls and high towers.

<sup>1</sup> They are found in the valleys of Nepal and Bhutan, and there are some ten millions in Burma and two and three-quarter millions in South Ceylon ; but there are none in India proper.

**The Origin of Caste**

In the far distant days, before the birth of Buddha, the Brahmins originated the social system we call "caste." We have already seen how the Brahmin and warrior classes came into existence. Gradually they became separate and exclusive "castes." Soon other castes appeared. All the Aryan people, of whatever caste, were declared to be "twice-born," entitled to wear the sacred thread,<sup>1</sup> and therefore of good caste. The Dravidian converts, though received into the Aryan fold, were not received on equal terms; they were inferiors, only "once-born," and therefore of low caste. At first, then, there were four main castes carefully graded, viz.:

ARYANS (twice-born)	{	1. Brahmins (priests).
		2. Kshattriyas (warriors).
DRAVIDIANS (once-born)	{	3. Vaisyas (agriculturists, industrial workers and merchants).
		4. Sudras (the low castes).

The non-Aryans who did not accept the Brahmin faith formed the "outcastes," of whom there are to-day some fifty-two millions. The great majority of them are in South India.<sup>2</sup>

**More Invaders**

While the Brahmin religion was spreading over the country and gradually developing, political changes were constantly taking place. Tribal chiefs increased in power and became local rajas (kings); from time to time one

<sup>1</sup> Put on with a priestly ceremony at adolescence and worn through life over the left shoulder and under the right arm.

<sup>2</sup> For more about castes and outcastes, see pp. 76-9 and 82-8.

of these would overthrow some of his neighbours and make himself a maharaja (great king). The continual turmoil thus created was increased by further invasions from without. Persians, Greeks and Scythians poured through the passes and founded kingdoms in North-West India; but the Aryan peoples maintained a continual struggle, and gradually assimilated them.

### The Coming of the Mohammedans

The eleventh century opened a new era of invasion for North India. In A.D. 1001, Mahmud, chief of Ghazni in Afghanistan, burst through the Khyber Pass with irresistible force. A born fighter and a stern Moslem,<sup>1</sup> he had taken a vow to march into India every year to "conquer the unbeliever." With green banners waving, and cries of "Allah Akbar!" (God is Great!) echoing from the overhanging crags, the Moslem host swept down the famous pass, entered the Punjab, and overcame all resistance of the Indian monarchs. During the next thirty years, Mahmud invaded Northern India seventeen times. Furious and impetuous were those raids, but they were met with stubborn resistance. Chief after chief and city after city opposed the invader, only to be defeated at last and compelled to yield. Often, when some Hindu stronghold was taken, the Indian women burned themselves in their palaces, while their men flung themselves upon the spears of the foe. Enormous booty was carried back to Afghanistan, but Mahmud's proudest title was that of "the Idol Breaker," for, true Moslem that he was, his zeal for Allah led him to break down every idol in his path of conquest.

<sup>1</sup> Islam, or Mohammedanism, is the religion founded by the Arabian Prophet, Mohammed, in the seventh century A.D. His followers are called Mohammedans or Moslems.

After Mahmud's death, other Moslem chiefs led their fierce warriors through the gloomy defiles into the plains of Hindustan, and each century brought fresh waves of invasion from the same quarter. The ancient city of Delhi was captured, and on its ruins an Afghan Viceroy erected a great Tower of Victory—the majestic Kutab Minar. Through wars and earthquakes, this incomparable minaret has been spared to the present day. Its graceful fluted walls and delicate balconies, its exquisite decorations and inlaid Persian inscriptions, combine to make it by common consent the most beautiful tower on earth.

For more than five centuries the struggle between Moslem and Hindu raged fiercely. The land seethed with warfare and slaughter, plunder and rapine, until the proud necks of Brahmin and Rajput were compelled to bow beneath the yoke of their conquerors. Mohammedian chiefs and generals carved out for themselves kingdoms—small or great—ruled for a few years (or for a few months!) and were then overthrown by more formidable rivals. The land continued to be one vast cockpit, but the majority of Hindus utterly refused to accept the Moslem's religion, and they were heavily taxed in consequence.

### **The Empire of the Great Moguls**

The sixteenth century brought from Afghanistan a new race of Mohammedans who were destined to found and consolidate a mighty empire. Babar the Mogul conquered the North Indian States, and his brilliant grandson, Akbar the Great (1556-1605), organized the new empire on the sound policy of "government for the good of the people." His long reign (contemporary with that of our Queen Elizabeth) was devoted to the

great task to which he set himself, and he succeeded as few rulers have ever done. Akbar's grandson, Shah Jehan, exceeded him in splendour but not in real power. To-day, in Agra and Delhi and Fatepur Sikri may be seen the magnificent sandstone fortresses, the marble palaces, graceful mosques and wondrous tombs of those mighty monarchs. Who has not heard of the glorious white marble Pearl Mosque at Agra, or the Fort Palace at Delhi with its gorgeous hall of Private Audience? Shah Jehan built this hall to be his imperial throne room—"a poem in marble"—the ceiling of which was of solid silver, and its wonderful pillars richly inlaid with precious stones in exquisite design. Over the arches, in Persian characters, are the words, "If there be a Paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this!" Who does not desire to see the peerless Taj Mahal—the fairy-like tomb of Shah Jehan and his beloved empress—the fairest, purest, loveliest building the hand of man ever wrought? Travellers have exhausted their vocabularies in attempting to describe that wonderful tomb; no picture can convey an idea of its amazing beauty. It hardly seems to be made of solid masonry—a fairy-like, ethereal thing. Seen at sunset when the rich colours of the sky tinge its marbles with soft rose-pinks, or when its inlaid devices sparkle like jewels in the Eastern moonlight, the Taj appears too dream-like to be real; one almost fears to breathe lest it should vanish like some fairy vision. In the full splendour of the morning sun, one shades the eyes from the dazzling purity of that gem of art. Tradition declares that when the Taj was finished, Shah Jehan put out the architect's eyes lest he should create another building to compare with it.

But the glory of the Mogul empire passed away. Its rebellious Viceroy set up as independent monarchs, and

the great empire of Akbar broke up into a number of contending states. Once more foreign foes thundered through the mountain passes. In 1739 the Persian Shah swept down upon Delhi and for fifty-eight days the streets of that proud capital were given over to massacre and pillage. Other Moslem invasions followed, and confusion reigned. (What other land has suffered so much from invasion?) But as the centuries passed, the invaders, while remaining Moslems, became Indians. They married Indian wives; their sons in their turn married Indian girls, and thus each generation became more Indian than the one before.

#### The Indian Moslems To-day

To-day there are more Mohammedans in India than in any other land. Of India's total 320 millions of people nearly 70 millions are Moslems. They are found chiefly in the north and north-west. Delhi and Agra, Peshawar and Lucknow, strike the visitor as essentially Moslem cities. In the Deccan and South India the Mohammedans are comparatively few, the one outstanding exception being Haidarabad City whose ruling prince—the powerful Nizam—is a Mohammedan.

A proud people are the Indian Moslems, distinct in every way from their Hindu fellow-countrymen. Even a stranger may recognize them at a glance—by their dress, by their physique, and by their proud carriage. Amid the Hindu populations of the south there is no mistaking that dignified, full-bearded man who strolls through the village street obviously regarding "the idolaters" around him as vastly inferior to himself. Converse with him, and you will discover a certain pride of conquest. He cannot forget that his Mohammedan forefathers—whether Arabs, Turks, Afghans or Persians

—came into this land as conquerors and ruled as overlords. He points to the tiny mosque gleaming white on the summit of yonder ancient hill fort. His fathers captured that fort after a desperate conflict, and built that mosque above the topmost rampart as a symbol of their triumph! Note the pride in his voice as he mentions the Tower of Victory near Delhi, Akbar's Gate of Victory at Fatepur Sikri, and many another memorial that still witnesses to the conquests of his race. The Moslem you meet in the railway carriage asks, if you have visited Delhi or Agra, and whether you have seen the Taj Mahal. "The Mohammedans built those places," he tells you, with a glow of pride. To him those marvels of architecture are living witnesses of the glorious past.

Again, these Moslems are intensely proud of their monotheistic faith. Their oft-repeated creed—

I testify :

There is no God but Allah,

And Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah—

is a proud boast as well as a confession of faith. From a hundred Indian towns the lofty minarets rise into the intense blue sky as if to challenge mankind, and from the balconies of those minarets five times a day that haughty "Witness" rings forth—"I testify there is no God but Allah!" As you talk with the village Moslem you immediately find the same pride of faith. Notice the contemptuous way he refers to the village gods—the quiet, though conscious, pride as he points to the ruins of some great shrine his ancestors destroyed long ago. Do you see those great mythical figures cut in the stone among these ruined temples?—his fathers knocked their heads off because they were vile idols!





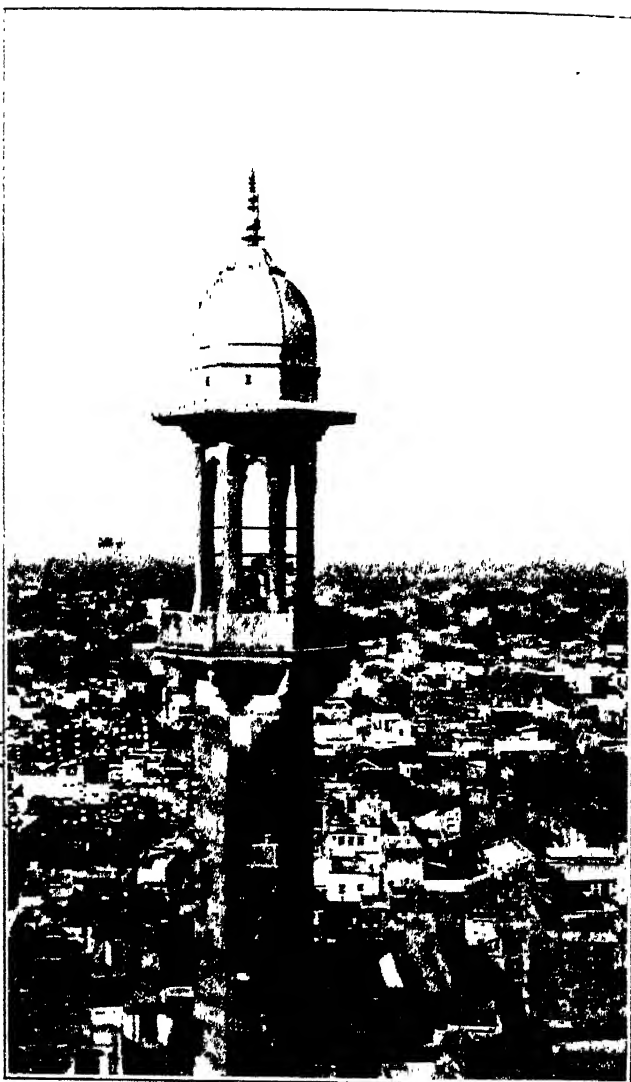


Photo by the Author

### BENARES FROM A MINARET

*This photograph was taken from one of the minarets of a mosque—the other appears in the picture. Most of the large mosques have two minarets. (See p. 56)*

Yet again, our Indian Moslem is proud of the great Mohammedan brotherhood. They have their divisions, no doubt; there are both Sunnis and Shiah<sup>1</sup>s; but there is an underlying sense of unity. They have one short, clear creed, one book, one Prophet. And there is the tremendously important fact that they speak one language—Hindustani, or more properly, Urdu. At any great gathering of Hindus the delegates speak many vernaculars, and English is the only language in which they can converse together. Not so with the Mohammedans; whether from the villages and cities of Upper India, or from the great plains of the south, they have a common medium of speech. Imagine the sense of unity that results from this link.

There is a strange impressiveness about Indian Mohammedanism. At evening, while the sky is flushed with gold, and the boys drive the goats through a cloud of yellow dust that somehow catches the gleams of sunset, and the smoke hangs low over the village, one hears a soft melodious call that seems to come from the sky. You pause and glance swiftly up at the minaret of the village mosque. On the lofty balcony stands the muezzin with hands uplifted while he chants the call to prayer:

Come to prayer!

God is great.

I testify there is no god but Allah.

I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah.

Come to prayer!

The music of that oft-repeated call seems to harmonize with the soft glow of evening. In a few moments, from the little mosque below, one hears the familiar sound

<sup>1</sup> Moslems have their sects, and their sect prejudice and bitterness, as well as followers of other religions.

of the prayers, and cannot but be struck by the impressiveness of it all.

There is no more remarkable sight in all India, perhaps on earth, than that to be witnessed every Friday in Shah Jehan's great mosque at Delhi—easily the finest mosque in existence. In the great open court, before the beautiful arches and arcades of the noble building, stand thousands of bare-footed worshippers in long straight lines, their faces turned towards Mecca. Two *Immans* (prayer leaders), on a high wooden platform, guide the worship by melodiously intoning the words "Allah Akbar" (God is Great), and with the precision of well-trained soldiers the worshippers go through the prescribed prayers—standing, bowing, bending, and kneeling. On the great day that closes the annual month of fasting, the court of this splendid mosque is crowded with 10,000 worshippers, and thousands more who cannot gain admission form up on the vast flights of steps outside and join in the prayers. It is the largest prayer meeting in the world.

The orthodox Mohammedan prays five times a day. No doubt there are truly pious men among them, and it is equally certain that there are many to whom the prayers have become a merely mechanical exercise. May we not say exactly the same of Christian peoples? It must be remembered that these Moslem prayers are said in Arabic, which to millions of Indian Mohammedans is an unknown language. Such frequent repetition naturally leads to formalism, and it must be confessed that Islam inevitably tends to become a religion of outward ceremony rather than of a changed heart and a pure life. When one knows something of the life of the Afghan horse-dealer of Lahore, the full-bearded Moslem money-lender one meets all over India and Ceylon, and not a

few other Moslems, one is reminded of the ancient words; "This people honoureth me with their lips but their heart is far from me."

. . . . .

The story told in this chapter gives new meaning to the hackneyed phrase with which we began. India is indeed a "museum of races." One after another they have entered through her rocky portals; they have conquered, settled down, intermarried. Many peoples of many races have introduced many languages, many different customs, and several religions. India is a land of marvellous diversity, and every statement one can make concerning her is only partially true. What applies to one part of India is not necessarily true of another. So great is the amazing diversity of her peoples.

## CHAPTER III

### MODERN INDIA

#### How It Began

ON the 20th of May, in the year of our Lord 1498, three tiny vessels dropped anchor off the town of Calicut on the south-western coast of India. Their sails bore the sign of a great red cross, and from their mast-heads fluttered the banners of Portugal. Over the stern of the largest ship there hung a gorgeous flag with the device and arms of Dom Vasco da Gama. With these three vessels of little more than 100 tons burden each, and with a total muster of 170 men, the intrepid admiral had performed the hazardous eight months' voyage from Lisbon. Harassed by heavy seas off the Cape of Good Hope, when his mutinous seamen demanded that he should turn back, da Gama had flung his charts and instruments of navigation overboard, and, declaring that he would put his trust in God, had set his helm and spread his sails to the south-western breezes till the palm-fringed coasts of India lay before him. We may date modern India from the day of da Gama's landing.

The new-comers were at first kindly received by the Hindu Raja of Calicut, but the Mohammedan Moors (Arabs) showed hostility. Fleet after fleet was sent out from Europe; till, after considerable fighting, the Portuguese got a firm foothold, and the reputed wealth of "the Indies" tempted adventurers of all classes. Goa and Diu were captured, and are held to the present

day. With Portugal came missionaries of the Roman Church, which now numbers nearly two millions of adherents, most of whom are in South India.

### The Coming of the British

Then came the English. In 1599 Queen Elizabeth's ambassador, Sir John Mildenhall, stood before the throne of the Emperor Akbar the Great. He came to ask for privileges for the English East India Company, recently formed for the purpose of trade with the East. Imagination pictures the brilliant scene in the magnificent sandstone and marble halls of Agra as the be-ruffled representative of our Tudor Queen advanced, doffing his plumed cap as he bowed his way between lines of turbaned courtiers to the throne of the mighty Akbar.

As years passed, the East India Company began to acquire territorial possessions. A piece of land where Madras now stands was purchased from a local raja in 1639, Bombay was given to Charles II as part of the dowry of his Portuguese bride in 1661, and the site of Calcutta was purchased in 1700. After a long struggle with the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French, the English Company overcame its European rivals and became master of the situation. Throughout the eighteenth century India was in a state of chaos; and in order to secure its position, the Company found it expedient to annex territory on a large scale by taking over the possessions of such princes as it was deemed necessary to depose.

At last, in 1798, Governor-General Wellesley determined to establish British supremacy throughout the length and breadth of India, believing that nothing else could ensure the peace of the country. His policy was

gradually carried to completion, until, after the great Mutiny in 1857, the East India Company was abolished, and the British Government assumed responsibility for India.

. . . . .

Although not a few officials of the East India Company were high-souled Christian men who did much for the welfare of the people, it must be confessed that the dominating consideration of Company rule in India had been trade. The new era, inaugurated by Queen Victoria's famous proclamation of November 1st, 1858, brought a radical change in the whole policy of Government. That noble edict, sometimes called the "Magna Charta of the Indian people," laid down the broad principles of freedom and justice for all, and at the same time announced the great purpose of preparing the people of India to take their rightful place among the nations of the world.

In our last chapter we beheld India a theatre of continual warfare—of invasion from without and strife and anarchy within. All that has passed away. For more than sixty years no battle has been fought upon Indian soil, and only the raids of lawless mountain tribes have disturbed the frontiers. The Ruling Princes of India have been at peace with one another, for the mighty fiat of England has gone forth, "Let there be peace," and the iron hand of Government has compelled obedience. In some parts of India one often sees villages surrounded with ancient moats and half-ruined walls. These crumbling ramparts tell of the insecurity of the past. But the days of robber bands and invading armies have gone, and such defences are no longer needed. In some of the Native States one may still meet men

armed with old flint-lock pistols, three-thrusts,<sup>1</sup> or curved daggers—a relic of days when every man had to defend his own life and property. The murderous Thugs, who made a practice of strangling merchants with whom they travelled, have been exterminated; and so have the equally dreaded road-poisoners. Infanticide, widow burning, and human sacrifice have been suppressed. Life has become sacred; and personal property is as secure as the law can make it. All this is no small achievement.

### Indian Highways

With peace and security there have come progress and the rapid development of the country. A hundred years ago India was almost a roadless country, because, owing to the general lawlessness, the few ancient roads had fallen into decay. Even to-day thousands of villages and small towns have no roads leading to them, and rough carts still bump along through trackless jungle and over uncultivated land. But India has now highways that for quality can compare with any roads on earth. From Calcutta to Peshawar, a distance of fifteen hundred miles, there stretches the Grand Trunk Road—a magnificent avenue of fine trees whose foliage gives welcome shade to travellers. One side of that broad thoroughfare is well laid and metalled for swift-moving *tongas* and *ekkas*; the other side is kept sandy for the convenience of lumbering bullock wagons and camel carts. And this is but one of India's splendid highways, the total length of which, in 1921, reached about 200,000 miles, nearly 60,000 miles being first-class metalled

<sup>1</sup> A small round hand-shield a few inches in diameter, with a strong iron spike projecting from the centre, and two other spikes projecting from either side of the shield. A useful weapon in a general *mêlée*!



roads. But fine as these highroads are, they are wholly insufficient for the needs of that vast country, and new ones are continually being made.

The quiet beauty of many Indian roads often reminds one of our stateliest avenues in England. Every tree harbours a score of squirrels, graceful little grey creatures, with broad stripes of yellow and black down the back; as one drives along, hundreds of them may be seen playing along the dusty road as far as the eye can reach. On such a road in North India there are people and vehicles of all descriptions: the grass-cutters trudge wearily with their heavy burdens; a "bunch" of camels, tied together, stride along in single file, sniffing scornfully as they pass; we overtake a long line of heavily laden bullock carts, or perchance a lordly elephant. Here and there we meet camel carts, whose iron bars instead of windows give them the appearance of menageries on wheels—these are the omnibuses of Northern India, and camels never look quite so haughty and disdainful as when pulling these four-wheeled monstrosities. No traveller need complain of monotony on Indian highways!

#### **In the Railway Trains**

The railways of India are even more important than the roads, because of the speed at which they carry passengers and goods over that land of distances. Slow as many Indian trains are, they are a vast improvement on bullock carts and camel carts going at a steady pace of two miles an hour! In 1919 India had 37,000 miles of railway line. During that year, these railways carried over 500 millions of passengers.

An Indian railway station has a fascination second only to that of the bazaars. The lower class travellers,

innocent of railway-guides and time-tables, go to the nearest station and simply wait until a train comes—it may be eight or ten hours, or possibly next day. They sit about, gossiping, quarrelling, eating, or smoking. Many perform their ablutions under the station tap, or they squat on the ground while the barber shaves them. Sometimes scores of them may be seen, wrapped up in their cloths, lying asleep on the platforms or in the roads around. Whole families of pilgrims, going to some holy city or sacred festival, sit quietly conversing or chewing *pan*,<sup>1</sup> until their teeth and gums are red. Time is no object, and the patience of India seems inexhaustible.

Before starting on a journey through India that involved some 6000 miles of railway travelling, kind friends advised me to provide myself with plenty of books to read during the tedious hours in trains. I did so—but did not read a single volume, for there were much greater attractions. The train is possibly the tourist's best opportunity of conversing freely with Indians of all classes. Forsaking the first-class carriages, usually occupied chiefly by Europeans, I travelled in the second and often in the third-class, usually choosing a compartment full of Indians. The people I met in the second-class could nearly all speak English; but in the third one seldom met anyone who knew more than a word or two. I look back with greatest pleasure to those long conversations with my Indian fellow-travellers.

Immediately on entering the compartment one found a welcome. The European who shows himself friendly will usually find friendliness among the Indian people of all classes. A polite salaam and a smile of greeting meet with a ready response. The people are thirsting for friendship; they desire to be understood,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 68.

and enter into conversation immediately. First come questions as to the whence and whither of your journey, your business—and possibly your salary. After that, the conversation flows freely enough; and the wise traveller will take the rôle of questioner and let the people talk and express their views.

One's fellow-passengers represent varied castes and creeds, races, and political opinions; they are dressed in all varieties of costume, and sometimes speak several Indian languages. Every one seems to have two or three little black tin trunks. Many carry a tin arrangement holding their food—a series of round boxes fitting one above another with a handle over the lot, each one containing a different curry or supply of rice or *chapatties*. Some passengers also have with them a big long-necked water-vessel of red earthenware, fitted into a wooden frame a couple of feet high. In those railway carriages I have on rare occasions seen a Hindu fellow-traveller perform his *puja* (worship), or a Moslem spread a little mat and say his evening prayers.

The third-class carriages are even more interesting, though decidedly less comfortable; one's companions are not all bipeds—or even quadrupeds! Everything is vastly below our “Thirds” in England, and every compartment is crowded—sometimes literally packed—with Indians of the poorer classes. The hard narrow seats are only half-backed, and one can see, or walk, from one end of the carriage to the other. Iron pillars, rising from the benches, support shelf-like sleeping places up above. Often amid such surroundings the people gathered round me, and by smiles and gestures tried to converse. Frequently they would point through the windows to something of interest and try to explain it to me—a wayside shrine or temple, a big ant-hill,

or a crocodile basking on a mud-bank of the river we were crossing. One could not help noticing the people's politeness and friendliness to one another, and above all their family affection. I have seen coolies get up and give their seats to women. In the early hours of morning, during one long all-night journey, a poor tired woman with her husband got into the compartment ; immediately two very poor men gave up their places that the woman might have room to sit with her feet up. At another stopping-place that same night, I saw a man jump down from the upper sleeping-berth so that a woman who had just entered the compartment might lie down full length and sleep. That carriage was crowded to excess, and even the floor was covered with sleeping people ; the men who gave up their seats had to stand for hours—and there was scarcely room for their feet. During those railway journeys one often got at very close quarters with the people and learned to respect Indians more because of the experiences one shared with them.

#### **Jungle Motor-buses**

One hardly expects to hear of motor-buses in Indian jungles ! Yet to-day there are some hundreds of them engaged in carrying passengers between country stations and towns fifty, seventy, or even a hundred miles away. There are probably millions of people in India who often see a motor-bus but have never seen a railway train. In some cases the motor-bus runs once a week, in others there is a more frequent service. Most of these vehicles are owned by Indian proprietors ; they are in charge of Indian drivers, and in appearance are not very unlike those plying in the rural districts of England. In some places the jungle roads have been improved, and small bridges have been built to carry the motors over narrow

streams, though often they go splashing through shallow rivers of considerable width.

A ride on such a motor route is full of interest. Looking ahead, one sees men and boys and even women leaving their work in the fields and running as fast as their legs can carry them towards the road, to have a better view of the snorting monster as it rushes past. The sound of the hooter almost unnerves the driver of a bullock cart half a mile in front; jumping from his seat, he pulls the frightened bulls this way and that, until in his terror he succeeds in pulling the cart at right angles across the road—effectually blocking the way—and sometimes the whole thing upsets and rolls down the low embankment.

A driver in Bengal told the writer how on one occasion a large tiger stood defiantly in the road. The fearless beast took no notice whatever of the hooter, and when the heavy motor-bus rushed towards him at full speed, he sprang upon the bonnet, smashed the wind-screen to atoms with one stroke of his great paw, and then, losing hold, fell backwards and was crushed to death under the wheels. The terrified driver pulled up to collect his nerves!

#### The Indian Postal System

In the year 1854 India had only 700 post offices; to-day there are about 20,000—which, after all, only means one for every 93 square miles of country. There are 100,000 postal officials, and the main mail routes exceed 160,000 miles. The bulk of the mails are conveyed by trains, steamboats, motor vans, and mail carts, or by galloping *tongas* that change horses like the old post-chaise of England. But mails are carried for many thousands of miles by less prosaic

methods—camels carry them over the deserts of Rajputana, and frail canoes along the streams and backwaters of Travancore. During night rides through the jungles, the writer has heard the tinkle of bells and seen the flare of a torch; soon a half-naked man has run steadily past, with mail bag slung over his brown shoulders. He is one of the many jungle postmen: in one hand he holds a short stick with little bells tied to it—his symbol of office—and with the other hand he waves the torch to frighten away wild animals. But more than once the torch has failed, and a man-eating tiger has carried off the unfortunate postman. These runners are still employed on more than half of the mail routes of India.

India possesses the highest post office in the world; it is at Pharijong in the Himalayas, 14,300 feet above sea-level. In the year 1919-20 the Indian Post Office handled no less than 1367 millions of postal articles excluding money orders. It also pays the pensions of ex-soldiers, insures Government employees, collects custom duty, receives salt revenue, sells quinine, and has a pay-on-delivery system for goods sent by shopkeepers through the post to their customers at a distance. The Telegraph Department, too, is a huge undertaking. At the end of 1919-20 it had 90,000 miles of line and cable.

### **Rainfall and Irrigation Works**

No other land has so tremendous a rainfall. In June the south-west monsoon, blowing across the Indian Ocean, drives the rain clouds over Western and Northern India till they reach the great wall of the Himalayas and discharge all their moisture in such a way that the foothills and valleys get the heaviest rainfall in the

world. At Cherra Punji, in Assam, the annual rainfall averages about 50 feet. As much as 30 feet have been reported there in a single month. In London the annual rainfall is about 25 inches! About mid-October the north-eastern monsoon, blowing across the Bay of Bengal, causes a tremendous rainfall in the Madras Presidency.

Only those who have been through a monsoon can realize what it means to have the sluices of heaven opened and the rain falling in a perfect deluge, while houses collapse and the whole land is flooded for hundreds of square miles. The writer has vivid recollections of being weather bound for three days at Madura station. We were unable to proceed on our journey as the railway embankment had collapsed through the floods. The next night a terrific thunderstorm broke over the city, and it seemed as though the station itself would be washed away. At daybreak we stood on the upper story veranda of the station and looked out over that strange scene. We saw coolies wading shoulder deep through the water in the station yard, carrying goods on their heads. Then we learned that the line to the north of the town (over which we had passed the previous day) had been washed away for nearly two miles! A few days later the newspaper contained the following very casual comment on that downpour :—

There was a great fear that if the rain continued, part of the town of Madura would be altogether washed away. Behind the railway station the compound had at least five feet of water. By morning, however, the rain ceased.

Yet the bulk of this amazing rainfall is carried off to the sea by the numerous rivers and wasted, and the failure of a single monsoon causes drought, the ruin of

the crops, and terrible distress to millions of people. Few lands have suffered so much from famine.<sup>1</sup>

For many centuries efforts have been made to conserve the water for use during the dry season. In old times kings threw up enormous banks of earth and constructed great "tanks" or reservoirs to store as much water as possible. During the last forty years the Government of India has undertaken vast works of this character, modern engineering skill making it possible to construct tanks on a much larger scale, with a system of canals to carry the water to different parts of the country. Up to 1920 no less than 28 million acres had been irrigated. In the Madras Presidency alone there are now nearly 30,000 Government irrigation tanks—mostly small—irrigating between  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and 3 million acres. In the Deccan several enormous dams are under construction, capable of holding over 20,000 million cubic feet of water. Owing to this irrigation work, famine has become almost impossible in some areas. But great as is the work accomplished, it is only the beginning of the gigantic task.

### The Ruling Princes of India

We have already mentioned the Ruling Princes of India.<sup>2</sup> Who are these Princes? In what sense do they rule?

India consists of two different kinds of territories: (1) "British India"—that is, the Presidencies and Provinces under direct British rule, and (2) "The Native States" that belong to and are governed by Indian Princes, and are not under direct British rule at all. They form about one-third the area of all India, and

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 85-7.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 17 and 27.



their combined populations number about 72,000,000—nearly a quarter of the whole population of India.

These States differ considerably in size, and their Princes in importance, wealth, and ability. Some of the States consist of a few villages under a petty chief. Others may be compared to some of the smaller European kingdoms. The great State of Haidarabad—the dominions of His Most Exalted Highness the Nizam—is nearly the size of Italy (without her islands), and has a population of over ten millions. Kashmir is about the same size, but has only three million subjects. His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore rules over a country more than half the size of England, with a population of six millions. Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Jaipur, Travancore, and others are states of considerable importance. Some of the Ruling Princes are Hindus; others are Mohammedans—as, for instance, the Nizam of Haidarabad and the Begum of Bhopal (the only woman ruler in India to-day)—and still others are Sikhs. Their importance is indicated by the salute of guns to which their Highnesses are entitled on state occasions. The Nizam of Haidarabad, the Maharaja of Mysore, the Gaekwar of Baroda, and the Maharaja of Gwalior are entitled to a salute of 21 guns each; seven other Princes are entitled to 19 guns, thirteen others to 17 guns, seventeen more to 15 guns, thirteen more to 13 guns, thirty more to 11 guns, and still thirty-one others to 9 guns. The minor rajas receive no salute at all.

These Native States have almost complete “home rule.” Laws made for British India do not apply to them. Their peoples are not British subjects. But the Princes are all subject to the suzerainty of the King-Emperor through his Viceroy and Governor-General. While some of the Princes are naturally of a conservative

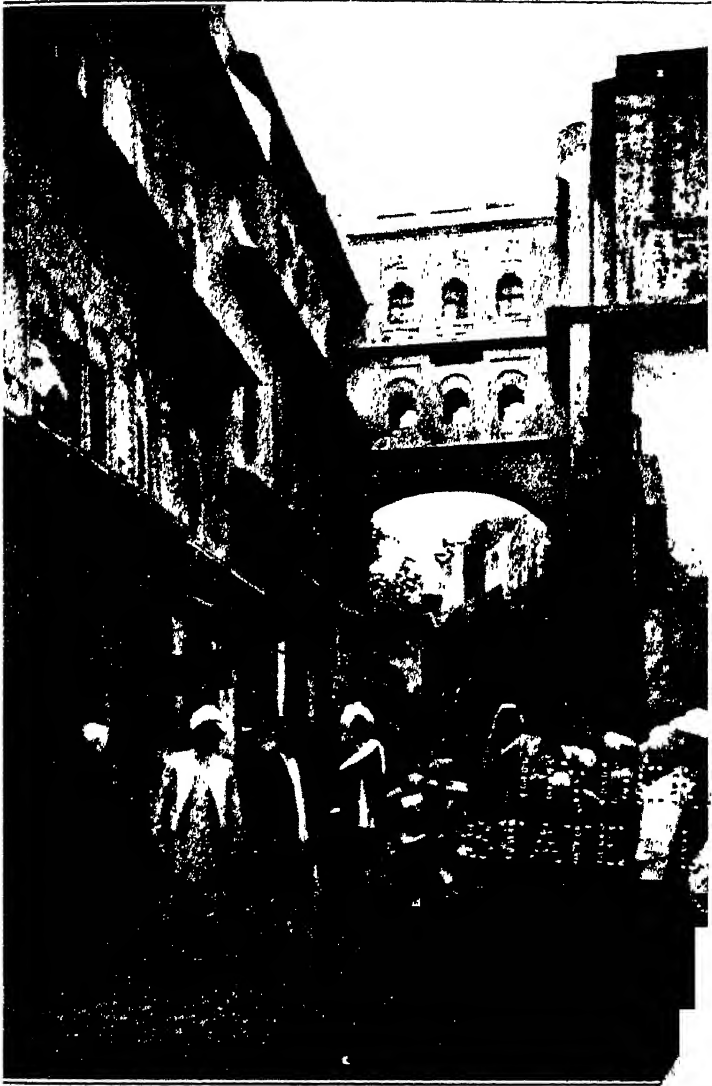


Photo by th

### A STREET IN A NORTH INDIAN CITY

*The picturesque bazaar of "a real Indian city unspoiled by mixture with things of the West." (See p. 52)*



and narrow-minded type, many are enlightened men of great ability. They all rule through a *Diwan* (prime minister), and have high officials in charge of the different departments of state.

In the States of these Princes we see Indian people under Indian rule, and a visit to some of their capitals is of entrancing interest. They have ancient strongholds perched on towering rocks, magnificent palaces and beautiful parks with lakes and pavilions embowered in the tropical vegetation; and the oriental splendour of their state processions is a sight never to be forgotten. The wealth of many of the Princes is immense, and their jewels are world famous.

The more important Princes have their palaces lit with electricity and fitted with every convenience wealth can provide. They have numerous motor cars, and at least one of them has a light railway in his palace grounds. Go into the *dufter* (study or private office) of one of the more advanced Princes, and you will find a telephone, possibly a dictaphone, an up-to-date bureau, filing cabinets, and all the latest office equipment; and the room is decorated with autographed photographs of our British monarchs, several Viceroys and other distinguished personages, and perhaps some trophies of the Great War in which the Prince held a command. The apartment might be the study of an English Cabinet minister!

No Native State has made greater progress than Mysore. Its Maharaja has made his capital—Mysore City—one of the most beautiful towns in India, laying out gardens and parks and fine broad roads. The new palace is one of the largest and most imposing in the country—a magnificent building crowned with towers and domes and turrets, its interior resplendent with

cloistered courts and richly-decorated pillared halls. His Highness has built a fine university, a general hospital, and other important public buildings. He has created an elective Representative Assembly, that meets twice a year to discuss the affairs of state and advise His Highness's Government. Mysore is the only part of India that has had the courage to disendow the immoral temple girls<sup>1</sup>—a truly great achievement.

The writer has vivid recollections of a state torch-light procession he witnessed in Mysore City. The palace was wonderfully illuminated, every window and porch, every dome and turret being outlined with myriads of electric fairy lights. In the great square in the centre of the palace buildings, dense crowds of people sat upon the ground while the Mysore troops took up their places—the Maharaja's own infantry in picturesque garb, and his cavalry in white and gold uniforms with leopard skins over their saddles. About ten o'clock at night the sound of music heralded the approach of the procession, and in a little while it entered the square with more cavalry and camels, and elephants with painted heads and trunks and wondrous trappings. Attendants walked alongside carrying big fans and torches; Bengal fires threw their green or red light over the whole scene. Last of all came the body-guard, and the Maharaja. His Highness was seated in a splendid golden howdah upon his state elephant, decorated with huge anklets and other ornaments of gold, and a cloth of gold and crimson hanging almost to the ground. The great Prince wore garments of cloth of gold—material that can be purchased in the bazaars of Delhi for about £150 per yard—and his turban was encrusted with diamonds. Above him, concealed in the little dome of the howdah, were

<sup>1</sup> See p. 104.

electric lights, which threw their rays down upon him and made his jewels flash and sparkle with each movement of his princely head. As he rode slowly across the illuminated square, amid the cheers of his people, one seemed to be in fairyland. It was a scene of dazzling Eastern splendour worthy of the *Arabian Nights*. We were standing under the portico of the palace when the huge elephant halted within a few paces of us ; and as the Maharaja alighted, he seemed like a fairy prince stepping out of the pages of a story book.

## CHAPTER IV

### A NORTH INDIAN CITY

#### In the Bazaar

FEW experiences can be more fascinating than a walk through the picturesque bazaars of a North Indian city—a *real* Indian city unspoiled by incongruous mixture with things of the West.

The narrow, winding streets are gay with the varied life and colour of the gorgeous East. And the shops!—those open-fronted shops, where the picturesque traders sit cross-legged among their wares and haggle over prices with would-be purchasers! The Kashmiri wood-carver exhibits his skilfully-made fire screens and dainty little tables, and the brass-worker sells his lamps and water pots of all shapes and sizes. As you pass the shop where calicoes and cotton goods are sold, you hear the steady humming of a Singer sewing machine, before which the tailor sits on the dusty floor making print shirts for his customers. The vendor of fruit and vegetables sits contentedly smoking his hookah until the voice of a customer recalls him to business; a carpet-merchant with bland smile beckons you to inspect his goods, and a perfume seller salaams as you pass. The idol-maker, the garland seller, the grain dealer, the silk merchant—all are there—now squatting drowsily among their wares, now bowing a polite salaam to a prospective customer, now rising up in the heat of an argument as to price. In many of the shops a little image of Ganesh,

the elephant-headed god of wisdom and good luck, stands on a shelf or in a niche in the wall—the presiding and much revered deity of the establishment: for will he not make his worshippers wise in trade and bring good luck with each bargain?

As you pass down the street a cloth merchant invites you into his place of business, and ascending the steps of the little front veranda you pass through a small room where a couple of clerks are sitting cross-legged on the floor casting up accounts—one of them, perchance, pounding out letters on a typewriter. In the main room of the house—a sort of large central hall—shelves of cloth and silk are arranged round the walls; if the establishment is a large one there may be a gallery half-way up to enable the assistants to reach the cloths stored on the high shelves. As you enter the room, you are salaamed to a seat on a carpet in the centre—it may be a European chair, or possibly an Indian “swing seat” hanging by four ropes from a stout teak beam in the ceiling. While the well-clad merchant entertains you with deliciously oriental compliments, almost flattering you into the belief that you are at least a lord, two or three assistants tumble over each other in their eagerness to pile at your feet all manner of fabrics. Turbans are displayed, rolls of cloth are unwound, and silk *saris* are held up for “my lord’s” inspection. Nowadays there are a few “one price” shops, but usually you select your material and then spend some time haggling over the price—time is no object with the Oriental merchant. He assures you that this piece of cloth cost him fifty-five rupees, but he will sell it to you for fifty rupees—he only makes such an offer out of the deep respect he has for “my lord.” You offer him *fifteen* rupees, and he smiles blandly as he explains, as con-



descendingly as he would to a foolish child, that every one else in the bazaar would demand at least double what he is asking of you ; nevertheless, to mark the propitious day of his meeting with you, he will waive the point and sell to you for *forty* rupees. You parry this by protesting that the cloth is really not the slightest use to you, it being far too narrow, but for friendship's sake you are prepared to give him *eighteen* rupees. "My lord is indeed a man of business," he declares, "and my lord knows that this cloth would be cheap at thirty rupees " ; but "just for luck," he is prepared to give it to "my lord " for *twenty* rupees *plus three rupees baksheesh* (gratuity). Time is pressing, and you eventually close the bargain at a total of *twenty-two* rupees—baksheesh included. The delighted head of affairs orders his clerk to make out a bill of sale for "my lord," and with many compliments and profuse salaams on both sides, the scene closes.

Stepping out into the sunlit street, you are confronted by a half-naked "holy man " whose ash-smeared body and filthy matted hair proclaim his separation from this vain world. He holds out a begging bowl and mutters the magic word "baksheesh."

The water-carrier jostles the driver of the panniered pony as people stand back to make way for a wedding procession with music and garlands. Or perhaps it is a funeral with mourners crying, "Ram is true ! Ram is true !" as they carry the corpse towards the burning-ground by the river outside the town. Women—mostly of low caste—surround the bangle seller, and cast covetous glances at his glittering display of cheap bracelets made of coloured glass or tinsel. Small boys hang round the sweetmeat stall and sigh for the fly-covered dainties that lie in sticky masses on

the brass trays or big green leaves that serve for plates.

If the street be wide enough, you may encounter a ramshackle springless *ekka*—a sort of glorified ice-cream cart on high wheels, with a canopy overhead supported by four upright poles that sway with the jolting of the cart; two precarious-looking shafts in front are tied with an assortment of strings and sundry odd scraps of old rope to an ill-conditioned pony. There is no seat; the passengers sit on the floor of the *ekka*, cross-legged if they be Indians, or with legs hanging down if they chance to be of the stiff-jointed West. A ponderous bullock cart rumbles along over the cobble stones, the driver guiding the faithful beasts by poking his toes into their hind-quarters and urging them forward by twisting their tails. In the Punjab, or some Native States, a stately elephant or a string of soft-footed camels adds variety to the scene on the wider thoroughfares.

#### The City from the Minaret

Now leave the busy bazaar, and let us wander down the narrow, ill-paved and evil-smelling streets that seem to have worked their way, corkscrew fashion, into the dense mass of human habitations that constitutes the city; they twist and wind in and out among the tall buildings, sometimes apparently boring underneath the very houses. If the city is situated in the plains, the streets may be more or less level; but if it be built on a hill-side there are sure to be many ups and downs, and the pedestrian constantly finds himself stumbling up irregular steps, of varying height and breadth and width, as he wends his way between high uninteresting walls of brick or plaster, broken here and there by massive doors or high-placed lattice windows. In some places he

comes across a house built right across the narrow street, forming a sort of arch above his head as he saunters along.

Those steps in the wall through yonder arched doorway lead to the terraced court of a little Mohammedan mosque—raised up on the roofs of several shops. Ascending the steps, we encounter a dignified Moslem with flowing robes, spotless turban, and a beard dyed red in imitation of the Prophet's own beard. For a moment he is austere—cold. But a smile, a polite salaam—and possibly something more (a touch of nature not unknown in the West)—usually secured a courteous welcome. Removing our shoes, we enter the tiled court. It is spotlessly clean—in marked contrast with the street we have just left—and the whitewashed walls and arcades of the mosque are dazzling in the bright sunlight. Look up. High above us are domes and cupolas surmounted with glittering crescents—the symbol of Islam—and rising above everything else, two tall slender minarets stand out against the blue sky.<sup>1</sup> What a view there must be from the lofty balconies near the summit! Half-hesitatingly, we ask leave to ascend, and the solemn custodian nods permission—an Indian moves his head sideways by way of assent, instead of moving it backwards and forwards as we do. In stockinged feet, we squeeze up those narrow spiral stone steps—up, and up . . . and up . . . till we stand, hot and breathless, on the balcony from which five times a day the *muezzin*<sup>2</sup> gives the call to prayer.

The city lies spread out below—not like a map, for in all probability you cannot trace the course of a single street. The writer remembers looking down from such

<sup>1</sup> See photograph facing p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> The official who announces the hours of prayer.

a minaret upon the holy city of Benares ; not a street was visible—nothing but a bewildering collection of houses curiously huddled together. The buildings, small and great, seemed to cling to each other, and grow out of each other, and stand on each other's shoulders, as though fear of some common foe had driven them to squeeze as close together as possible for mutual protection. Between these crowded buildings the narrow winding streets, often overhung by the upper stories, are invisible. Nothing is seen but a monotonous vista of housetops, relieved here and there by temples and mosques, by gilded domes and whitened cupolas ; with an occasional minaret to break the intense blue sky that forms the background of the picture. As one looks down upon the houses below and wonders what life must be like in such places, a hundred questions arise in one's mind.

Some Indian cities are still encircled by ancient walls that have borne the brunt of many a siege, and from the minarets one may catch sight of venerable ramparts pierced with great gateways and defended by moats and mighty towers. Possibly one may get a peep of the open country beyond the walls and suburbs, where ancient domed tombs and piles of crumbling ruins tell of days when Arabs, Moguls, Tartars or Persians contended for possession of the city. Around yonder walls Rajput and Marathi, Sikh and Sepoy have struggled together in furious mortal combat.

As we gaze across the city, the sun sinks towards the yellow plain to the west, its slanting rays gilding tower and dome and minaret with the splendour of evening. The courtyards of countless houses are filled with purple shadows. A babel of voices rises up from the streets below.

### The Bazaar by Night

Descending from the minaret, and bestowing upon the custodian of the mosque a little more baksheesh, we once more enter the streets, and immediately notice a great change. The intense heat of the day is over and the streets are filled with cool shadows. The people turn out of their houses to do their shopping or to enjoy a pleasant stroll before the evening meal. In the bazaar, the shopkeepers are lighting their brass lamps—small open vessels of oil with little cotton wicks flickering from a projecting lip. Some of these lamps hang from above by brass chains; others stand on the stall on a beautiful brass pedestal. No shopkeeper is dozing now; hookahs are pushed aside, and the real business of the day begins. The street is literally crowded with people, who press around the grain shops and vegetable stalls to buy food for the evening meal, or haggle over the price of chillies for the curry. Through such a crowd, *ekkas* and *tongas* drive slowly. In vain the drivers scream out the Indian equivalent for "By your leave!" The street is narrow and crowded, and vehicles must needs proceed at walking pace. People hardly heed the *tonga-walla* (driver) as he cries, "Oh! you with the water-pot!—you with the sugar-cane!—get out of the way! Son of a pig (to a low caste man), stand back! . . . Now, my father (to an old man), make way!" Notice how careful he is in addressing any proud Moslem who gets in the way—Mohammedans have a habit of resenting rude remarks, and the worthy *tonga-walla* has no desire to be knocked off his seat. People dodge in front of the bullock carts only to find themselves under the disdainful nose of a lordly camel as it strides slowly through the crowd. As you move aside to avoid the camel's apparently unmanageable legs, you notice just beside

you—perhaps within a yard of your eyes—a face you can never forget, a human face scarred and disfigured, the most pitiful of God's creatures, a leper. There are 150,000 of them in India. No one seems to take much notice of the sufferer, and you pass on. Every man, woman and child seems to be talking at the top of their voice! There is nothing of the "Silent" East about this fascinating scene.

Peep in through that big arched gateway between the shops. It is a shabby little temple to Krishna or Siva—or perchance to Rama and Sita. The priest is lighting the lamps round the shrine; the tom-toms are announcing the hour of evening *puja* (worship), and already a few people are passing in to hang a garland round the idol or to sprinkle a little holy water before it. Next door, the jeweller is blowing up his little charcoal fire; then, squatting down before it, he leisurely proceeds to work some gold or silver into nose-rings or anklets for his clients. The sweetmeat seller is doing a roaring trade now. Tourists who have not been through the Indian bazaars at night have not seen the real India. It is then that East is East.

### Visiting some City Homes

Come once more into the dark narrow lanes of the city—so dark after the brightly-lit bazaar. The crowds and noise are left behind, and we wend our way by the light of a hurricane lamp—carefully avoiding sundry holes in the road—to visit a few Indian homes. Can anything be more confusing than this maze of nameless streets after nightfall? In the darkness we almost run into a sacred bull going to the bazaar for a feed. A stranger would be hopelessly lost in such a labyrinth; but we are in the hands of a zenana missionary lady who

is quite at home in these tortuous by-ways. She knows them in the dark, too, for she is a medical worker, and has sometimes been called out at night to visit some sufferer. In her company we shall get into Indian homes that would otherwise be closed to us as Europeans and strangers.

Our guide pauses before a low door heavily panelled and studded with iron nails. "I know the people who live here," she tells us. "I doctored their little girl when she was ill with pneumonia last cold weather, and they are very grateful. The women do not keep purdah (seclusion); so they won't mind my bringing you." Then, knocking loudly on the door, and raising her voice, she cries in Hindustani, "Koī hai? Koī hai?" (Is anyone there?) The call is repeated, and then someone comes to the door. "Is that you, Miss Sahib ji?" says a woman's voice from within. "Yes, Mother of Ram Gopal; it is I. And I have brought visitors from across the dark water to see you. May we enter?"

Heavy bolts are withdrawn, the door is thrown open, and the light of our lantern reveals a little Indian housewife dressed in a cinnamon-coloured skirt, with a veil of bright green muslin covering her head and thrown round her shoulders. Her large ornamental ear-rings are of silver, and there is a big ring of thin gold wire two inches in diameter through her nose. That vermilion spot on her forehead means that she is married. Perceiving that one of her visitors is a man, she modestly draws her green veil across the lower part of her face with one hand while she salaams with the other, and bids us enter. As she moves, we notice that her feet are bare and she has cheap lead rings on her toes—surmounted with tiny bells that tinkle as she walks. We follow her across a small court a few yards square. The people love a secluded courtyard, not overlooked by neighbours.

The rooms run along two sides, with a portico of rough brick-work pillars in front, supporting an upper story on one side.

Several men and women rise from the earth floor to greet us, and someone pulls a *charpoy* (an Indian string bed) from one of the dark rooms into the portico for us to sit upon. Two or three children stand in the shadow till shyness has worn off, and then come and sit beside us—a little seven-year-old girl nestling close up to our guide who is no stranger to her. By the light of a couple of clay lamps we sit chatting together. The family speak Hindi and our missionary friend acts as interpreter as we converse about England, about high prices, and about the Prince of Wales's visit to India. With evident delight they tell us the oft-repeated story of how the great King-Emperor, when he himself visited India, stopped his royal train on Sunday that he "might go to the Christian temple to do his *puja*"; and their eyes glisten with approval and pride at the knowledge that the great monarch is religious. They ask what places we have visited, and what we think of India; and they tell us of the preparations they are making for the Dewali festival—the Feast of Lights—to-morrow night. The men talk most; but the women are interested listeners and often interject remarks. They are evidently pleased to have this diversion.

While talking, we glance around and note the simple domestic arrangements. In one corner of the portico two young girls are preparing the evening meal; one mixes the ingredients of the curry, while the other tends the big earthenware pot, of rice cooking on the small Indian fire-place. The house is almost destitute of anything we should call furniture—the two or three *charpoy*s are the only articles that seem to rise to that



distinction. The earth floors are uncovered save for one or two rather dilapidated grass mats, and there is a general sense of untidiness and discomfort about the whole place. The brick walls are covered with rough plaster—in places it has crumbled away, and a portion shows the remains of what was once whitewash. Garments in regular use are hanging from poles suspended horizontally by ropes from the open rafters above—even in the city white ants are troublesome, and it is safest to hang things thus. Several strong wooden boxes contain the best clothes and such jewellery as the family possesses. Brass and clay vessels and the simple cooking utensils lie about; there are also sundry rough brushes, and general items of rubbish. One wall of the court is plastered with dozens of round flat cakes of cow-dung, put there to dry in the sun that it may make fuel.

In the dim light we can just discern several crude pictures of Hindu gods stuck (without frames) upon the walls of one of the rooms—gaudy-coloured prints of Rama and the beloved goddess Sita, the pure and devoted wife of Rama and the ideal of North India's womanhood, especially in the United Provinces. Sita is a vast improvement on Kali the horrible goddess of Bengal. By moving a foot to the right we can just catch sight of a tiny brass lamp burning before a little plaster idol, around which a little rice, a couple of plantains (bananas), and half a coco-nut are lying. The family is a pious one.

Our guide notices that the evening meal is now ready, so at a sign from her we rise and take leave, several of the family escorting us to the door and little Roshni clinging affectionately to "Miss Sahib ji's" hand. "Salaam!" and again "salaam!"

Our next call is at a very different home. "Down this passage," says our guide, "lives an elderly Moham-medan whom we sometimes employ when we need extra help. He is rather dull, but he is faithful and we can trust him. He can cook, wait at table, go messages, look after the house in our absence, and do all sorts of odd jobs." As we approach the wide-open door of what looks more like a blacksmith's shed than a dwelling, our friend calls, "Koī hai? Abdul Kareem!" The surprised Abdul Kareem springs to his feet with apologetic salaams. He stands before us barefooted—a tall graceful figure with a beard turning grey. He wears tight white trousers, fitting close from ankles upwards; a white tunic-like coat hangs to below the knees, and a big white turban shows off to advantage his rather handsome face. Being off duty he has thrown off his *cummerbund* (belt), but a print duster thrown over one shoulder proclaims him to be servant to a sahib. "We were just passing, and I thought I'd like to show my friends where you live, Abdul Kareem. I don't want you just now. (Abdul Kareem again salaams.) May we look inside?"

Nodding his head sideways, Abdul Kareem stands aside, and we peep into his dwelling—just one windowless room, possibly fifteen feet by eight, with a door near each end. Everything is untidy, and very dirty—except Abdul Kareem's white garments. An old *charpoy*, the inevitable wooden box, the necessary cooking things, and two or three old faded photos from the mission house, and a good deal of litter—that is all. The cheerless room is full of smoke from the fire over which some goat's flesh is stewing in the pot. Abdul Kareem's wife—he is too poor to afford two—is sitting cross-legged upon the floor rolling out *chappatties*<sup>1</sup> to eat with the

<sup>1</sup> Used instead of bread. They are the size and shape of a pancake.

meat. Abdul Kareem and his wife live alone; their elder son is in far-away Bombay, the second boy is in the army, and their only daughter, a girl of fourteen, is married and living at a distance. There is no idol or shrine here, and no pictures of the gods; Abdul Kareem is a staunch Mohammedan, and has a deep contempt for "the idolaters" around him. He declares that he would "as lief be 'that animal' (he dare not defile himself by saying 'pig' outright) as a pagan!" We salaam and pass on.

"I know a Hindu family in the next street," says our friend, "but I'm not sure if they will let me take you in. They are rather strict purdah people, and may not be able to hide the womenfolk away—they have no separate zenana. We'll try."

"Koī hai? Koī hai?"

The voice is recognized immediately, and several female voices answer, "Oh, Miss Sahib ji! Come in!"

"But, Mother of Govind, I have friends with me, and one is a Sahib!" There is a merry titter and a confused chattering within. Then a man's voice calls through the still barred door: "Please wait a minute, Miss Sahib ji; only one minute!"

In a few minutes the heavy bolt is withdrawn, and with a salaam the eldest son of the family receives us. We enter the courtyard. The women have completely covered their heads with their veils, but they remain sitting at the hand-mills grinding corn in the dim light of clay and brass lamps. This house, like so many in India, is run on the joint family system; the four sons have each brought home a wife and, with sundry bright-eyed children, all live together with the old parents.

We are taken into an almost dark inner room, where





Photo by the Author

### A LOW-CASTE HOME IN NORTH INDIA

*This photograph shows practically the whole dwelling. There is a tiny yard through the archway opening to the left. The man in front of the half-wall (behind which the family sleep) is smoking his hookah. Before him a clay vessel of water is boiling on the curious little fireplace. The wife is sitting the grain. Although the family is a poor one, she is carefully veiled.*

the old father lies sick on a *charpoy*. We sit on a wooden chest by his side while our friend suggests some simple remedy. "Take care that you don't touch that hookah on the floor," says our guide. "If you do, they will have to break it up, for they can never use it again. "And," she continues in an undertone, "if you quietly look round, you will see eyes watching you through that barred window. The women are trying to have a look on the sly!" As we take our departure we notice that the women in the courtyard are trying to peep at us under the edges of their veils. Indian women are as human and as full of curiosity as their sisters of other lands. Human nature is much the same the world over!

"To-morrow we will call on a wealthy Mohammedan family in another part of the city," our guide remarks, as we wend our way through the now silent streets to the mission bungalow just outside the town.

. . . . .

#### A Wealthy Mohammedan Home

Next morning we are up at daybreak, only to find our missionary hostess already at work. But the sun is high in the heavens and the chill of the November morning has given place to the heat of forenoon as we step into the little bullock cart that is to take us for several miles to pay the call. "I had hoped to get away earlier," says our hostess, "but the teacher of our girls' school in the town came to see me about a little scholar who has just been withdrawn from the school to be married—she is only eleven years old. And then a boy with a very bad foot, was brought in—a cart had run over it in the bazaar, and instead of bringing him to me at once, or taking him to the Indian doctor at the little Government hospital three miles away, his people

tried doing it up themselves : now the foot is in a dreadful state and full of maggots. Then two men came to haggle over the price they ask for re-thatching our bungalow. So I've had a busy time. Isn't it hot ? "

The hump-backed bulls trot merrily along, urged forward by sundry exhortations—more or less forceful—from their driver, and we pass right through the town and out into the less crowded suburbs beyond. Here the houses are larger and better built, but are still very close together. Indeed some of them are without courtyards. Many of them are three and even four stories high, and have balconies of stone or carved woodwork overhanging the street. These balconies are supported by pillars or by stout beams that project from the walls. The carving on the front of such houses is frequently very elaborate, and in some instances the woodwork is brightly coloured. Many houses have big pictures of the gods painted on both sides of the doorway. Most old Indian towns have many really splendid specimens of domestic architecture.

Before one such house we alight, and as we ascend the half a dozen steps of the front portico—or veranda, as it is usually termed—an Indian gentleman comes forward to greet us. He is a grain merchant, and the lower story of the house is a grain store. We are shown along bare passages, and up a stone staircase, into a large apartment with several windows—or rather stucco arches *without* windows—opening on to the projecting balcony of fine old woodwork. Indian mats and Persian rugs lie about the floors. There are several cane-seated chairs—including one or two long low ones on which one may lie with legs stretched out—and three or four small carved wooden tables with big trays of lovely brasswork. There is the inevitable hookah, sundry cushions, a rather

elaborate clock, a western-looking iron and brass lamp-stand, several niches in the walls for lamps of more oriental character, and sundry knick-knacks evidently brought from Europe. On the walls are several photographs of places our host visited when he was in England, including one or two of King's College, Cambridge, where he graduated. On the bookshelves at one end of the room we notice Shakespeare, and Tennyson, and Tagore, two or three of Tolstoi's works, Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, John Stuart Mill, Green's *Short History of the English People*, several French novels, Arnold's *Light of Asia*, and Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* and *Ethics of Islam*, besides various works on mathematics and science. Possibly there may even be a copy of the Bible—a class book left over from schooldays; our host regards it as a school book, an English classic, nothing more. Most important of all—standing alone in a place of honour on a side table—is a beautiful manuscript copy of the Mohammedan sacred book, the Koran, with camphor-wood covers inlaid with ivory and silver. It rests on a Koran-stand of carved sandalwood. Not far away stand the brass ewer and basin for the ceremonial washings for prayer—both inlaid with tiny pieces of coloured enamel-work, and kept wonderfully clean and bright.

Our host speaks English fluently, so while we men converse with him about the political situation, the probable effect of Mr Gandhi's non-co-operation movement, and the Turkish question, our missionary friend asks his permission to take the ladies of the party to see the ladies in the zenana on the top story of the house.

In this orthodox Mohammedan family the purdah system is rigidly observed; the ladies seldom go out of the house—when they do they are carefully veiled and conveyed in a "purdah carriage" over which a thick



covering is thrown as an additional safeguard against the prying eyes of men. To such women life is virtually imprisonment, and time often hangs very heavily upon their hands. Their apartments are almost destitute of furniture ; their simple duties are soon attended to, and little save gossip remains to while away the time. Quite uneducated, their minds are often limited by the narrow confines of their own little world. They do, and undo, and re-do each other's hair ; they delight in powders and perfumes and jewels ; they adorn themselves with bangles and flowers ; they spend much time cutting up betel nut for chewing with *pan* leaf—which is as dear to a Mohammedan as cigarettes to an inveterate smoker ; they tend their children, caress them and spoil them and play with them, and then, in a fit of anger, slap them ; they quarrel with the other women, and sometimes indulge their envy and jealousy to cruel excess. Making all due allowance for oriental custom and for the explanations of modern apologists, the fact remains that the lot of millions of Moslem women is unenviable. Such joys and advantages as they possess cannot compensate for the dull secluded life and inevitably stunted powers.

Many Mohammedan women are very devout, and though, unlike their husbands, they are unable to go to the mosque for the Friday prayers, they may be seen spreading their prayer mats and performing their worship in their own homes. Those who are able to read often spend considerable time reading the Koran.

In very many Mohammedan homes the confinement is less rigid, and the women move freely about the house with the male members of the family—they have full liberty within the home, but if a strange man comes they at once retire to their own quarters until the visitor has left. On certain occasions they are allowed to go—

carefully veiled of course—to weddings, or to visit some relative who may be ill or in sorrow. This semi-seclusion is very common in some parts of India.

It must not be supposed that no man is ever allowed to enter the zenana, as is sometimes erroneously stated. No *stranger* is admitted, but the men and boys of the family, male relatives, and in some cases even male servants, enter freely. Unlike the Hindus, the Mohammedan men and women may eat together, and there is a good deal of family life and real affection between husband, wife, and children.

Our host, being an enlightened man, has only one wife; some Mohammedans have two, and a few—very few—have three. Their religion allows them four, on condition that they can afford to keep them, but only princes and nobles avail themselves of this. Among thoughtful Moslems, however, there is a growing conviction that it is best to have only one wife. They practise the joint family system like the Hindus, and this means that the house has a good many inmates. It is the presence of so many women—wives of different brothers—in the zenana that leads to so much quarrelling. "When you have a lot of keys on one bunch, they will continually jingle," says the proverb. The zenana missionary is teaching several of the little girls of this household to read. As an educated man, our host realizes what it means to have an illiterate wife who may hold his affection but can never share his deeper life. He would like his son—now away at High School—to be married to a girl who can read; indeed if he can find a really educated girl for the lad, he will certainly do so.

The education of women is one of the most urgent problems. Of 32 millions of Moslem women and girls less than 140 thousand can read. Progress is being made

in this matter, but it is tragically slow and there is still much prejudice against educating women. Many educated Mohammedans are painfully conscious of the unsatisfactory conditions of womanhood, and one of them has declared :—

At the present day a great deal of literary talent lies buried behind the purdah, but alas !

‘ Full many a flower is born to blush unseen  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.’

In saying this . . . I am in no sense defending the abuses which have sapped the foundations of our social system and ended in the undoing not of the women but of the men. . . . The rising generation of Mohammedans are becoming more and more conscious of the abuses which shut out men from the most charming portion of mankind, whose softening influence and gracious presence lend, as we find in Western lands, an added dignity and sweetness to life.

It is to be feared that the tenacity with which the orthodox cling to the letter of their sacred Koran is a hindrance to reform, for some of its teaching, as well as the personal example of the Prophet Mohammed himself, is unwholesome and unjust to women. Mohammed may have been an affectionate husband ; but one who practised polygamy, concubinage and child-marriage, and even fell into adultery, can hardly be expected to lead womanhood to its rightful position in the world.

The above sketches will serve to give an impression of life in an Indian city. Of course, all cities are not alike. There are very considerable differences in the appearance of the streets, the prevailing style of houses, and many other things. Some cities have features of special interest—cotton mills, palaces, old citadels, Government buildings, or a High School (a mission High

School, or possibly one given to the city by a wealthy Indian gentleman who believes in education).

In South India the towns and cities are usually less crowded ; the streets are wider and the houses larger—most of them are of only one story and have big courtyards. In most cases the Southern town centres round some vast temple—very different from the small temples of the North—and the Moslem influence is not nearly so strong, though there is sure to be a mosque, and the minaret is as conspicuous as the church steeple in an English town. Variety is one of the chief charms of India. The more cities you visit, the more you marvel at the difference they exhibit.

## CHAPTER V

### VILLAGE LIFE IN THE SOUTH

IMAGINE yourself approaching a South Indian village by a raised path between the flooded rice-fields—a sort of clay wall a couple of feet high, separating one field from another. The rains are over and all nature is green and gay. You hear singing and the merry laughter of men and boys as they begin the day's work. The clay walls retain the water in the little fields, and the peasant cultivator, more than ankle deep, is busily ploughing through it with his primitive wooden plough and two patient bullocks that splash the water and stir up the mud as they pace steadily along. Or, perchance, the ploughing is over and the *ryot* (small cultivator), still walking through the water, is sowing his rice seed.

In the soft light of early morning the village looks pleasant enough with its stately rows of tall palmyra-palms standing like sentinels against the azure sky. Blue aloes are growing from the golden sand near the river, and there are thick masses of cactus and prickly pear—the hiding-place of the deadly cobra and other poisonous snakes. Around the village are mango trees, or great banyans from whose spreading branches tendrils grow down till they reach the ground, work their way into the soil, and in time become new roots around the parent stem. A well-grown banyan tree is a grove in itself.

At the entrance to the village, beneath a banvan. is

an earth or brick platform two or three feet high, its sides striped white and red to show that it is sacred. Upon it stand the village gods—strange-looking deities of local fame—or the snake-gods cut in stone, or possibly some honourable member of recognized Hindu pantheon such as the monkey god, or the elephant-headed Ganesha. Little offerings of marigolds, a coco-nut or a few plantains, or a clay saucer of milk or *ghee* (clarified butter) lie before the idols, placed there by pious hands. Stuck in the ground, their points towards the sky, there may be several spears for the gods to use in self-defence if need should arise. The crude stone images are smeared with saffron or vermilion, or garlanded with flowers. This is the village sanctuary. Not far away there may be a couple—or perhaps a dozen—huge clay horses, ten or fifteen feet high, covered with whitewash and gaily painted over with patterns done in blue, red, and yellow. These fearsome creatures are for the god Iyenar—the guardian of villages—to ride upon when he goes round the village by night.

As we pass the village well, the women and girls are drawing water, or chatting together and laughing merrily while waiting their turn to fill their beautifully polished brass water-vessels. At our approach they draw their *saris* (long cloths) over their faces and turn away. As they walk down the shady street we cannot fail to notice their graceful easy carriage—due doubtless to their lifelong habit of carrying those heavy water-vessels upon their heads.

The village looks rather uninteresting as we enter—just a cluster of mud-and-thatch dwellings, ugly in themselves, but often pleasing in their setting of palmyras. There is often an air of general untidiness about the place—a fallen hut, lying just as it collapsed during the

rains, or a heap of stones deposited several years before and just left ; or there is a stagnant muddy pool where the oxen drink and the water-buffaloes lie down in the heat of midday. There is no attempt at paving or road-cleaning or drainage. How one would like to "tidy up" the whole place !

### The Village Home

The houses are made of unburnt bricks, plastered over with brown mud—possibly whitewashed—and the big thatch roof overhangs in front so as to form a veranda under which the people sit to shelter from the fierce rays of the sun. Here and there a better-built house has a roof of red tiles—made perhaps at the Industrial Mission tile-works at Mangalore. Village houses are seldom more than one story high, and most of them have some sort of a courtyard in the centre ; a veranda runs round the court and the rooms open out from it—tiny dark rooms with little or no furniture, and very stuffy. No part of the house is "purdah," for in most parts of South India the zenana system is practically unknown, and the women are free to go about and even to work in the fields with the men. The courtyard is the centre of family life ; there the domestic work is done, the babies are washed, the grain crushed in the stone pounder, the food prepared, and the brass vessels vigorously polished with red earth till they shine in the sunlight.

At meal-times the men sit cross-legged on the floor on the shady side of the veranda, while the women pile their big leaves with rice and curry and fill the little brass drinking vessels with water. Afterwards, the women sit down and eat what is left. Then the leaves are thrown away. Tin or white enamel plates are now coming into use instead of the primitive leaves.

If the family is an agricultural one, the dwelling will be strewn with simple agricultural implements. If they are of the potter caste, there will be heaps of prepared clay in the courtyard, with dozens of newly-made vessels baking in the sunshine. In a shady corner, before the time-honoured wheel, sits the potter ; his bare feet keep the wheel revolving while his skilled hand shapes four or five vessels from one piece of clay. Or perchance, the people are of the oil-presser caste ; then in the courtyard—or maybe on a bit of land just outside the dwelling—there will be the oil-press, a hollowed log cut from the trunk of a large tree, with an arrangement for crushing the oil from the seeds, the whole being turned by two cream-coloured bullocks that pace steadily round and round.

Sometimes all the people in one street will be of the weaver caste. Their primitive looms are set up in the tree-shaded street before their dwellings, and they may all be seen—men and women—busily working at a piece of cloth the length of the street ! The small children play around and dodge one another by ducking underneath the half-made fabric.

As we walk along, we see the carpenters working at their sawpit with a two-handled saw, the blacksmith with his forge, and the idol-maker painting images for the villagers to buy. In the little bazaar is the goldsmith, blowing his small charcoal fire to melt up some jewellery a customer desires to have altered, or to turn some silver rupees into anklets for the landowner's wife. The Singer sewing machine is humming merrily—probably there is not a village in India without at least one "Singer."

If the village is a large one, there is sure to be a temple—large or small, unimportant or famous through all the



countryside. The principal street leads right up to the main gateway, and the high walls surrounding the temple are covered with broad perpendicular stripes of red and white.

### Caste

In the street that runs round the temple are the houses of the Brahmins—usually some of the best houses of the whole village, for are not the Brahmins the highest and most influential of the 2500 castes<sup>1</sup> of India? They are not all rich, but all are proud of birth and position and training. Even a visitor can recognize a Brahmin at a glance: the dignified bearing, the erect head, the finely chiselled features—these things alone mark him out as head and shoulders above his fellows, and immeasurably above the outcastes. Theoretically the Brahmins are all priests of one sort or another, but nowadays it would be impossible for them all to get a living in connection with religion, and thousands of them take up other employment—many are in Government service, others are “pleaders” (lawyers), teachers, or merchants. All Brahmins are scrupulously careful about the ritual of their religion. The touch of a person of lower caste would defile them. Their cooking utensils, the cooked food, and even the fireplace, must be jealously guarded from defilement of even the shadow of a person of lower caste.

Most, if not all, Brahmins are educated men, taught from early childhood not only to read and write the language of the part of India in which they live, but also the sacred Sanskrit—the ancient literary language

<sup>1</sup> The four main castes (see p. 27) are to-day subdivided into about 2500 castes. The lower subdivisions of the lowest caste group (the Sudras) are termed “low castes.” The “Outcastes” are those who are outside the whole system of Hinduism.

of the Aryans now only understood by the educated, and no longer in ordinary use. Sanskrit is in India what Latin is to us in England. The great sacred books of the Hindus are in Sanskrit, and therefore as inaccessible to the bulk of the people as the Latin Bible was to the ordinary Englishman in the Middle Ages. During the last hundred years many thousands of Brahmins have been through Government or missionary colleges and are familiar with the English language and literature, and a few have completed their education at a university in England. The Brahmins, then, are the brain of the country and its natural leaders. Unhappily their usefulness is very largely discounted by their narrow caste prejudice and intolerance. As a class their attitude to the rest of the population is one of proud exclusiveness, and to the low castes and outcastes they are often tyrannical and unjust.

Naturally, many Brahmins are quite alive to modern movements. The writer remembers visiting one such in a large South Indian village. The house was built of stone, with a spacious front veranda with big pillars and stone couches—like huge sofas—for the inmates to recline upon in the open air. Ascending the half-dozen steps to the veranda, and entering the house by a short passage, we found ourselves in the guest room, a rather large apartment lit by a skylight. There were rugs, mats, and cushions on the floor, and several cane-seated armchairs. A recent copy of the *London Times* lay on the swing seat in the centre. But the most remarkable thing about the family was the presence of two ladies—the mother and sister of our host. Both were widows, and, by all rules of Hindu religion and custom, absolutely forbidden to re-marry. But there was a startling difference between them; they repre-

sented the old ideas and the new. The elder was a widow of the old order—her head shaven, no jewels, and the usual coarse white garment; the other—her daughter—although a widow, was clad in beautiful silk garments, wore gold jewellery on fingers and toes as well as in her ears and round her neck and arms, and her black glossy hair was decorated with gold ornaments and flowers. A greater contrast it would be difficult to imagine. "We educated men see that some of the old ideas are not right," our host remarked. Yet on a hundred other points that Brahmin gentleman would be inflexible, and would suffer any loss rather than "break caste."

In the village community quite a number of castes are represented, broadly referred to as "good caste," "middle caste," and "low caste"; beside the Brahmins there will be such castes as the landowners, the bankers, the farmers, the goldsmiths, the weavers, the blacksmiths, and many others. Among the "low castes" there will be the washermen, the basket makers, and the barbers. In a way these castes resemble our English social grades and trade unions. But there is a wide difference: caste cannot be changed as an Englishman can change his occupation; there is no choice about it, for it is hereditary, the child being of necessity of the same caste as its parents, taking up the same trade, occupation, or profession. The castes are separate and distinct; they are shut off from one another in water-tight compartments. People of one caste cannot eat or live with people of another, and (with one or two curious exceptions) they may not intermarry.

Caste rules are very complex and very rigid and—in Western eyes—often very unnecessary and foolish. By receiving water from a person of a lower caste, by eating food defiled by the shadow of a low caste person, by

smoking a hookah another has touched, by crossing the "black water" (the sea), or even by being touched by the garments of some outcaste in the bazaar—by these and a hundred other things a man's caste may be "broken," and a good deal of ceremony is required to restore it. Generally speaking, the caste system is much stronger in the villages than it is in the cities where all sorts of people are crowded together; and it is stronger in South India than in the north where the presence of many millions of Mohammedans has considerably affected social conditions. But there are many evidences that the more rigid caste rules are weakening. When railway trains were first introduced a high caste man would ask to have a compartment to himself; the railway companies were quite willing to oblige—providing the said passenger paid for all the unoccupied seats! Nowadays all castes travel together with little distinction beyond that of First, Second, Intermediate, or Third class carriages. Tram-cars and motor-buses are likewise bringing the members of the different castes to sit in one another's company and, on a long journey, to sleep and eat their food in one another's presence. Many a caste man may to-day be seen wearing leather boots—a grave departure from custom, for leather in any form is a defilement to a strict Hindu. The writer once travelled with a Brahmin gentleman who, without shame, confessed himself to be a *leather merchant*—an almost incredible instance of yielding to modern tendencies. "We who are educated," he explained, "have come to see that caste is something deeper than mere employment."

#### The Daily Round

Taking them as a whole, the villagers of India are an industrious folk. Under the fierce rays of the tropical

sun they toil from dawn to sunset—ploughing, sowing, transplanting, reaping, or tending their cattle. If the season is dry, they incessantly labour at the wells. Others do their appointed work as blacksmiths, carpenters, or weavers.

At sundown the day's work ends, and in the forty minutes of twilight the husbandman gathers his tools and drives his tired oxen homeward through a cloud of dust. The boys and girls call loudly as they bring in the flocks of goats, and the smoke of many fires hangs low over the village. As the workers come in from the fields, the village market, held every day at sunset, is in full swing. Most of the goods are laid out on the ground for inspection and sale, and for an hour or so there is as animated a scene as one could wish to see. In the dwellings, the women and girls are preparing the simple evening meal, and soon the toilers squat cross-legged on the floor to enjoy what to many is the one good meal of the day—the morning and midday meals being usually less substantial.

Simple as the food is, it is taken with keen relish by the toilers. The high caste Hindus are nearly all vegetarians—largely because of their belief in the transmigration of the soul, which, in one of its many existences, may dwell in a cow or goat, in a sheep or a fish. The staple food of the villagers varies according to the grains grown in the district. In some places it is rice, in others *ragi*, *dāl*, millet, barley, or some other grain. Pulse is used everywhere. Different curries supply variety to food that would otherwise become wearisome. They consist of such things as chopped vegetables, red-pepper, chillies, cardamoms, cumin, and coco-nut. The curry is always prepared fresh for every meal, and what is left over is thrown away. The people hold that the curry is



Photo by the Author

# AN OUTCASTE VILLAGE, SOUTH INDIA

*"A hundred yards apart from the main village is a little hamlet of fifty or sixty miserable mud-and-thatch sheds. . . . This is the home of the outcastes." (See p. 82) The tall trees to the right are palmyra palms.*



not good unless the spices and other things are specially chopped or ground immediately before use. A girl who can cook a dozen or fifteen different curries has a higher value in the matrimonial market. In addition to the curry, the Indian loves chutney and all sorts of pickles, but those of high caste are forbidden to touch onions and garlic. There are many different caste rules about food.

After the evening meal, the villagers give themselves over to gossiping and smoking. By the light of a flickering clay lamp they sit cross-legged or recline on grass mats under the veranda of a neighbour's dwelling and discuss the latest news—the rains, the state of the crops, the unrest, or the actions of the Government. Possibly one of their number reads to them scraps from some more or less badly-printed vernacular newspaper. If the village be in the Mysore State, they probably have a copy of the *Vrittanta Patrike*, a weekly newspaper, printed in the Kanarese language and issued by the Wesleyan Mission Press in Mysore City. This paper gives the news of the week and deals with all social, moral, and religious questions from the Christian standpoint. It is read in villages in every part of Mysore State. Lolling on their mats in the warm night air, the villagers smoke their hookahs while someone reads its contents to them, and they talk things over and express their views.

At the village inn, or perchance on the earth platform beneath the council tree, a more serious discussion is in progress. The village *panchayat* (council of five) is in session. These five good men and true are elected by the people to form a permanent court to decide all claims and disputes and to deal with offenders. To-night there is business to be dealt with, so the village head-man has called the *panchayat*, to assemble at eight o'clock. Sitting in the dim light of lanterns, they order the village watch-



man to bring the disputants before them. The washerman and the goldsmith come forward and lay their case before the court. The washerman, after prostrating himself on the ground, narrates how his wife took four silver rupees to be made into anklets, and he now claims that the anklets supplied are not silver at all but base metal. The goldsmith denies the charge, and enters a counter claim that the washerman has not returned all the clothes sent to him for washing. Witnesses are called and heard. The discussion is a long one, high words are used—in high tones too—and then the council orders all present to retire while they discuss their verdict. After due deliberation, they call the disputants before them again, deliver their judgment with stern words of rebuke, and, if necessary, inflict a fine or some punishment on the guilty party. For two thousand years such courts have dealt with the minor disputes of the village folk.

At length the village street is silent; the lights are extinguished, and all sleep save the watchmen who are paid by the whole community to keep guard. But even the watchmen have been known to sleep! Then the stealthy *dacoit* (robber) finds his opportunity to dig quietly through the mud walls of some house and reach the chest in which the silk cloths and family jewels are stored.

Such are the main features of village life, and we must never forget that India is a land of villages. They are strewn over the whole country, and number more than three-quarters of a million. Nine out of every ten of India's people live in villages.

### The Outcastes

A hundred yards or more from nearly every main village is a little hamlet of fifty or sixty miserable mud-

and-thatch sheds of the simplest character. As you approach, a half-starved dog comes yelping towards you; then a man covered with a coarse blanket of goat's hair comes forward. The huts around are dilapidated and dirty—little more than rough crooked poles supporting a makeshift thatch roof, with mud walls built up afterwards. The dim interior is divided by a half-wall, the inner portion being the sleeping place. The whole hut is seldom more than ten or twelve feet square. All is squalor and wretchedness. During the rains the roof leaks and the floor soon becomes a puddle.

This poor hamlet is the home of the "outcastes"—people who are below all the castes and outside the pale of orthodox Hinduism. The outcastes are often called the "untouchables"; their very presence is pollution; they are despised and shunned by all. Their ancestors were slaves, bought and sold with the land. With the advent of British rule slavery has passed, but the servitude and degradation remain. The outcastes do all the scavenger work of the village and all the most menial work in the fields. They live on the coarsest food, they are not allowed to use the village well, they dress in the poorest rags, and are utterly illiterate and superstitious. They know nothing of the meanest comforts, and are destitute of all but the barest necessities of life. The children run about naked, playing as children will—even though they be despised outcastes—or chasing the dirty black pig that is uprooting the gourd that sprawls over a clump of cactus and up over the roof of the hut. Some outcastes possess an ugly domestic animal known as a water-buffalo, and others have a few goats or chickens. A few of the more prosperous may own a couple of acres of land. But even these are extremely poor. A recent

and most thorough investigation shows the family budget for one year for a family of three adults and five children, owning one acre of wet land and one acre of dry. The total income from all sources is proved to work out at less than £13 per annum. And the family of eight people have to live on this pittance !

The grinding poverty of the outcastes makes them a ready prey to the moneylender ; and often the land-owner for whom they labour strengthens his hold upon them by lending them money at a rate of interest that makes it impossible for them ever to free themselves. Thousands are in debt for years over a matter of a few rupees, being barely able to pay the interest and utterly unable to reduce the loan. In some parts, especially in the Native States, it is not an unknown thing for a man to bind his wife, his children, and himself for long years of servitude as security for a very small loan.

The outcaste's life is one of toil, privation, and fear. The hamlet is deserted during the daytime, for all the people are in the fields, working ankle-deep in mud and water as they transplant the young rice shoot by shoot. In the evening they go home for a scanty evening meal, and then wrap themselves in their tattered blankets for the night. This is the ordinary daily round of India's fifty millions of outcastes.

There are terrors all around them. They pass their lives in fear of evil spirits, whom they try to propitiate at little devil-shrines. More real dangers are not wanting. The girls go out in the dusk to gather firewood, and in mistake for a stick, pick up a deadly snake. Or perchance, during the wet season, when the ground around the village is flooded, a cobra gets into the hut at midnight, and some sleepy inmate rolls over upon the venomous reptile. Within an hour all is over. There

are leopards in the jungle around, and though they seldom attack men and women unless startled, they carry off children or goats whenever they have the opportunity. There are bears on that bold rock-strewn hill half a mile away, and it is no uncommon thing for a man or woman to be mauled by one. Perchance a man-eating tiger is keeping the whole neighbourhood in a state of alarm, and the outcaste knows that his door—mere wickerwork daubed over with mud—is but slender protection against such a beast. Incredible as it may seem to those who do not know India, the Government returns show that every year about 21,000 people are killed by snakes and over 2000 by wild animals.<sup>1</sup> Medical missionaries frequently deal with unfortunate people who have been attacked but have managed to escape with a severe mauling. Of course all village people, of whatever caste, are liable to these dangers, but it is the outcastes who suffer most, because their dwellings are less secure and their mode of life more exposed.

### What Famine Means

Terrible indeed is the fate of the outcastes when the rains fail and gaunt famine stalks through the land. The writer can never forget scenes he witnessed in the Nizam's Dominions in December 1920. There had been no rain for nearly three years. Imagine the state of the country! Scores of rivers were dry. Many of the great storage tanks were dry, and others were reduced to a pool of green stagnant water in the centre. The whole

<sup>1</sup> The total returns are startling. Here is the record for one year :—

Killed by tigers . . .	786 persons and 28,093 cattle.
„ „ leopards . . .	399 „ „ 42,812 „
„ „ wolves . . .	244 „ „ 9,984 „
„ „ bears . . .	728 „ „ 7,317 „
„ „ snakes . . .	21,880 „ „ 10,376 „

land was brown and as hard as iron. It was pitiful to travel over what should have been green rice-fields, with that fierce Indian sun beating down relentlessly—though by courtesy it was called the “cool” season. I climbed to the summit of the ancient rock fortress above the little jungle town of Medak and looked down upon the waterless plain below. It was a vision of parched lands and dried-up rivers and tanks. Yet that plain is sprinkled over with villages; there are about 600 of them within a 25-mile radius of where I stood.

While visiting these famine-stricken villages, one wondered how the unfortunate people existed. In the big wells the water was something like seventy feet below the surface. Dozens of wells were drying up, and new ones were being dug—great holes with sloping sides like huge shell-holes or the craters of small volcanoes. The earth was so dry that it would crumble and fall in if the sides were too steep. We saw the people patiently labouring at their heavy task, carrying out the sandy earth in palm-leaf baskets—working all through the moonlight nights to avoid the heat of the day.

As always, it was the poor outcastes who were suffering most. The well-to-do people had their reserves, and the ordinary village folk, though feeling the pinch severely, were able to buy just enough food to sustain a more or less precarious existence. But the multitudes of outcastes were reduced to a really terrible condition—living on a miserable half-handful of grass seeds, and forced to eat whatever roots they could find, and to stew the bark of trees. Yet the village markets were held each evening as usual; there were grains and vegetables on sale there—for those who could afford to buy at famine prices. But the outcastes could not buy. Hungry people have gathered around me and attempted to kiss

my feet, or have held out their hands in sad appeal. Their scanty garments exposed their poor emaciated bodies and one could count their ribs. Some of them rubbed their hollow stomachs as if to prove to me that they were hungry. More than once little children have climbed upon my knees and stroked my hands; they have looked pleadingly into my face and held out their little thin hands imploringly for food. Indian children are such playful little things, and it went to one's very heart to see them suffering.

In British territories, Government does a great deal to relieve the distress, and in the area just referred to, the Nizam's Government was doing its own relief work. But many of those outcastes would fare badly indeed were it not for the noble work of missionaries, many of whom have been a veritable "refuge from the tempest . . . the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" to many thousands of helpless people. With the aid of money sent from England, it was possible to purchase cheap rice in Burma and thus feed multitudes who had no other helper. Each famine has left thousands of helpless children on the hands of missionaries.

### **The Ravages of Disease**

Under such conditions, is it to be wondered at that plague and cholera and smallpox run riot among the villagers? The vitality of the people is so reduced that they cannot resist these and other diseases. In 1918, influenza swept through India carrying off over six millions of people. Can we wonder that the deities most worshipped by the villagers, and especially by the outcastes, are the fierce goddesses of cholera and smallpox? At times of special outbreaks of disease, these horrible divinities are worshipped by whole villages of

people, and hundreds of buffaloes, goats, sheep, and chickens are slaughtered, till the ground is drenched with blood and the hungry goddess is supposed to be propitiated. Such scenes have been frequent in recent years.

. . . . .

It is among the villagers, and especially among the outcastes, that Christian missionaries have had their greatest successes. Mass movements are continually taking place on a large scale; scores of thousands of people have already received baptism, and they and their children are now being trained in the Christian life. Only those who have seen such work in Haidarabad, Tinnevely, and among the Chamars of the north can realize what is being done to uplift the lowly and depressed classes of India.

## CHAPTER VI

### HINDUISM IN DAILY LIFE

#### The Daily Worship

To the Hindu, be he villager or citizen, religion is everything : it is an inseparable part of his daily life, woven into the very fabric of his being.

The Brahmin, especially, is probably the most religious man in the world. His first duty in the morning is worship of the gods. As the earliest tinge of dawn steals into his dwelling, he rises from floor or *charpoy*. He will not permit food or water to pass his lips until he has worshipped his gods, and soon he may be seen preparing for his devotions. First he cleans his teeth with a small twig—he may not worship until he has done this. If there is a river or tank near, he will bathe : failing that he will perform ceremonial ablutions as best he can with water from a brass *lota* (bowl), or waterpot of red clay. Before the purification, he repeats a prayer to the sacred rivers :—

Oh Ganges! Oh Jumna!  
Oh Godaveri! Oh Sarasvati!  
Oh Narmade! Oh Indus! Oh Kaveri!  
Be ye present in this water.

Then, standing in the water and turning towards the rising sun, he thrice takes up a handful of water and pours it out as a solemn libation to the sun god, saying each time the most sacred of all Hindu prayers :—

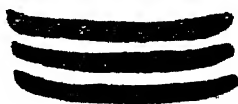


OM,<sup>1</sup> earth, sky and heaven!  
 OM, that excellent vivifier!  
 Let us meditate upon the Divine Light.  
 May He enlighten our understanding.

Then in the little courtyard or a room of his house, he squats before one of his sacred books or his family deity. With white lime (if he be a worshipper of Vishnu), or sacred ash of sandalwood mixed with water into a thick paste (if he be a follower of Siva), he traces the sacred marks of the god upon his brown forehead. There are many such marks, denoting various sects, but the most common are :—



I VISHNU

II VISHNU  
(another sect)

III SIVA

Having put on the sacred mark correctly, he rings his little brass bell to call the attention of the god. He pours oil or a few drops of holy water over the idol, or sprinkles sandalwood water over the sacred book; and then, still sitting cross-legged, facing the East, with hands together, he bows with his face to the ground. He mutters his creed :—

Glory to Brahm whose form is inscrutable,  
 Whose essence is divine wisdom,  
 Who is manifest as Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.  
 OM!

Again ringing his bell and bowing, he proceeds to

<sup>1</sup> The mystic letters OM represent the names of the three great gods—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.

count the beads of his rosary, muttering to every bead the name of the god he is meditating upon. Some *mantrams* (mystic sentences and invocations) are repeated. Another ring of the bell, and *puja* is over. India has many sects, and the details of the worship vary considerably, but the general features of high caste worship are not widely different from the above.

The Brahmin is not content with morning worship alone. At midday, when the sun is highest, he again worships ; and at night, ere he wraps himself in his long shawl and lies down to sleep, his last care is to perform his proper *puja*.

#### Religion in Daily Life

The average Hindu does not, like many so-called Christians, lay aside his religion when his morning *puja* is over. It is a necessary part of his life and occupation, and he goes about his business with strict religious observance. If he be a shopkeeper, he has a little plaster figure in a niche in the wall, and it receives due attention in the hope that the god will aid him in his business. The goldsmiths, the weavers, the potters, all have their gods to whom they look for assistance and prosperity : tiny clay or brass lamps burn before them, and offerings of coco-nut, betel-nut, flowers or rice are presented daily. In hundreds of Hindu homes there is an image of Ganesha in a niche over the entrance or inside the courtyard facing the door.

Similarly, religion dominates all the domestic arrangements—the food, the cooking, the eating. No animal food, and especially beef, must be eaten—religion forbids it. Rice and curry are eaten with the fingers—religion commands it. The Brahmin's drinking vessel must not *touch* the lips—that would mean defilement. No shadow

of a person of low caste must fall on the food or especially on the water, or even upon the cooking vessels—that would render the food or water unclean and it must be thrown away. Indeed, even the *glance* of a low caste person is a defilement.

Every pious Hindu firmly believes that, before his birth, the “pen of Brahma” wrote upon his forehead what he should be and what he should do, his character, his occupation, and his destiny. It is the gods who decreed whether he should be a farmer or a blacksmith. If he suffers the loss of a son, if plague or cholera devastates his little family, if the failure of the rains ruins his crops, if floods cause his house of sun-dried mud to collapse, if his wife is bitten by a deadly snake, or a dearly-loved child “falls into the pit of Christianity,” he will steel his heart to the sorrow or loss by the reflection that “the fate that is written in a man’s forehead, even that must be.” He is convinced that the gods are angry with him because of some sin in a former life, and he will set himself to appease their wrath by sacrifice of a goat, by a vow to dedicate a little girl to the gods, or by a pilgrimage to some famous shrine. Seldom does he doubt that the gods are all around him, and the fear of them is ever upon him.

All important family events are accompanied by a religious ceremony. Before a betrothal takes place, the Brahmin priest must cast the horoscopes and pronounce the stars of the boy and girl harmonious. The long wedding ceremony is full of worship and religious observances; it is the priest who unites the hands of bride and bridegroom and declares them man and wife. There are further ceremonies when children are born, and at all other important events, until, after death, the priests perform the final rites before the eldest son places rice

in the mouth, applies the fire, and the body is burned on the funeral pyre.

### Worship at the Village Temple

But a Hindu is not content only to worship at home. Down the street is the temple, and thither he often goes. It is usually a comparatively small and not very imposing building. Over the entrance gate of the South Indian village temple there is a small *gopuram*, or tower, rising like an oblong pyramid and covered with strange carvings. The worshipper, with a small offering in his hand, passes through the gateway, crosses the little court, and enters the pillared portico before the inner shrine. He now sees the idol in a dark chamber immediately before him and just visible through a door-like aperture. The idol is often a very mean-looking image of wood, stone, or clay. If it be hung with garlands or smeared with paint, the effect is still more tawdry. As the worshipper advances, the *pujari* (priest) receives his gift and presents it to the god, while the worshipper bows or prostrates himself on the ground. The ringing of a bell, and the pouring of a little oil or holy water over the idol, and the repetition of a *mantram*, completes the *puja*.

Most temples are so constructed that the worshippers can walk round and round the shrine. They usually go round three times, with head bowed and hands together. If it be a temple to the great god Siva, there is, before the idol, a stone or bronze figure of a recumbent bull—a symbol of the strength of the god—and the worshipper will sprinkle it with water and walk several times round it. The whole *puja* may be performed in a few minutes, or, if the worshipper be more devout, or has some pressing need for the god's help, it may be prolonged indefinitely.

The Brahmins perform their devotions with much greater care than the common people.

There is no particular day for worship corresponding to the Christian Sunday or Jewish Sabbath, or even to the Moslem Friday. Neither is there any specified hour for going to the temple. Indeed, there is nothing at all resembling a "service" as we understand the term. There are no seats, no congregation, no singing, no sermon or discourse—in fact, ordinarily there is no *collective* worship at all. It is all *individual* worship: the worshipper goes into the temple any day and at any hour he pleases, performs his *pūja* without reference to that of any other man, and then goes away. Truly, either morning or evening is the more correct time for going to the temple, but even then there is nothing resembling a Christian service. The writer has often stood by the door of some shrine about the time of sunset, and, peering in through the wide-open doors, has seen the priests lighting the lamps before the idol, and the worshippers going in with their offerings. Non-Hindus are hardly ever allowed to enter these small temples.

There is in all this temple-worship nothing really resembling Christian prayer. If a man desires prosperity for his crops or healing for his child he does not kneel before the idol and say, "Oh God, give me a good harvest," or "Oh God, restore my child to health." He simply goes to the temple of a god reputed to be able to deal with one or other of these matters, and believing that the god will fulfil his desire, he makes an offering, rings a bell, mutters the god's name as he touches his beads, perhaps repeats a *mantram*, walks a few times round the shrine, and then goes home. That may be worship, but it is not prayer in the Christian sense of the term.

### The Great Temple of Madura

There are times when special needs drive the Hindu to special worship in the hope that he may get assistance from some god more powerful than the one he usually adores. Some dire calamity threatens him, or a lawsuit is pending, or a child hangs between life and death ; so he goes to his village temple and registers a solemn vow that, if the desires of his heart be granted, he will show his gratitude by distributing money or sweets in the name of the god, or by feeding the Brahmins, or by going on pilgrimage to one of the great temples or sacred cities. If he dwells in North India, he may select Benares, or Allahabad, or Hardwar, or Nasik ; if his home is in the south, he may propose Madura, or Tanjore, or Conjeeveram. There are scores of such places in India. Before making a pilgrimage, he will often seek the advice of his priest ; and he will time his journey so that he may fulfil his vow at some great annual ceremony such as a car festival or a bathing *mela* (religious fair).

For people who dwell in South India, a favourite place of pilgrimage is the great shrine of the god Siva and his wife Minakshi at Madura—one of the largest and most impressive temples in the country. It covers a square twenty-five acres in extent and is surrounded by a huge outer wall nearly a mile round. It is said to have taken a hundred and twenty years to complete, and to have cost about £800,000.

As the pilgrim approaches Madura, he sees from the railway train (if he travels in so modern a way!) the cluster of *gopura* (huge temple towers) rising into the blue sky and dwarfing all else around. These towers are of singularly graceful outline, and surmount the gateways of the outer and inner walls ; they are covered

from top to bottom with carved figures of gods and goddesses. At the entrance to the temple, under one of the magnificent towers, nine stories high, the pilgrim's eye falls on a notice forbidding Pariahs, Palliars and all low caste people to enter. This temple is not for such as they! Moslems, lepers, and people suffering from infectious and loathsome diseases, are likewise excluded.

The writer once bribed the priests to allow him to ascend to the summit of a lofty gate-tower. It was an unpleasant climb, for one's shoes had to be taken off and left at the bottom. The narrow steps and dark winding passages were infested with bats, whose wings flapped one in the face as they resented the intrusion. At last we reached the top, and sitting in a sort of trap-door on the topmost ridge of the tower, looked down upon the vast temple below. Wonderful indeed was the view of its many open courts interspersed with palm trees, its covered halls, its labyrinth of colonnades and cloisters of wonderfully carved pillars, its square bathing tanks, and many other buildings. Rising above all were five gigantic gate-towers similar to the one we were standing upon; they vary from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in height, and five others are upwards of one hundred feet each. They are all absolutely covered with hundreds of carved figures. Over the two principal shrines—those of the god and goddess—are small ornate domes, overlaid with gold which glitters wondrously in the bright sunlight.

Now descend the tower and walk through the courts and the bewildering colonnades, thronged with worshippers. Mark the Brahmins as they squat cross-legged to perform their devotions or walk round and round the shrine with bowed heads. In some of the arcades are small companies of students studying their





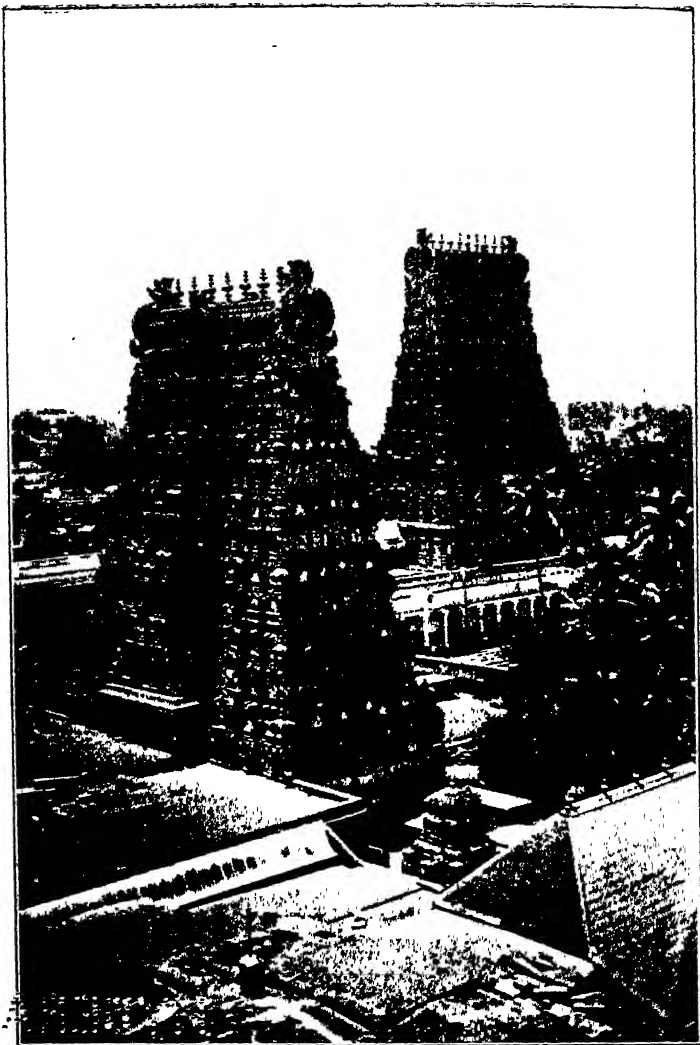


Photo by the Author

## TWO OF THE GATE TOWERS, MADURA TEMPLE

*"These towers (gopura) surmount the gateways of the outer and inner walls; they are covered from top to bottom with carved figures of gods and goddesses." (See p. 95) Five of them are from 150 to 200 feet in height, and five others are upwards of 100 feet. In the foreground are the flat roofs of some of the cloistered halls of this great Temple.*

Sanskrit books or reading sacred texts from the Vedas. There are solemn-faced old pundits (learned Brahmins) explaining the ancient classics or some stories about the gods. Pilgrims are bathing in the grass-green water of the "Tank of the Golden Lily." A plunge in that tank ensures salvation! One sacred book tells how, by bathing there, the great god Indra was cleansed from the sin of slaughtering a Brahmin—one of the five greatest sins. Ash-smeared Sadhus are prostrating themselves and counting their beads. Another remarkable sight is the wonderful "Hall of a Thousand Columns," built in the sixteenth century, and containing 985 pillars, each cut from a single block of stone. The carving of these pillars is extraordinary for its boldness and variety of design; they are marvels of workmanship. In other parts of the temple are the dwellings of the priests and attendants, hundreds of whom live within the walls. Five big elephants also live in the temple and take part in the ceremonies—and beg for money from visitors!

At the entrance to the principal shrine is a tall brass flagstaff—its top rising through a square hole in the stone roof. Near the flagstaff is the inevitable stone bull; the worshippers are sprinkling water as they walk round and round it. None but caste Hindus may pass through that carved doorway into the gloomy chamber in which the idol of Siva dwells. As we stand and peer into the darkness, it is just possible to discern in the far distance the dim outline of the image with a few lamps burning around it. Several priests are moving about before the idol, weird figures in the gloom. A hall of dim mysteries indeed! The idols of this temple have jewels worth tens of thousands of pounds—the gifts of pious worshippers during hundreds of years.

But wonderful as the temple is, there is much to surprise

and even to grieve the visitor from the West. He will see much worship, but very little true reverence. Begging is carried to the point of profanity, and there is a good deal of what to the western mind is downright sacrilege. The temple attendants follow at your heels and garland you with flowers to obtain money, and even the priests do not scruple to receive gifts from worshippers and visitors. In two vast halls there are bazaars; under the great pillars, carved with mythological figures, are stalls at which the pilgrims may buy brass idols and garlands, fruit and photographs, toys for children, and coloured powders for painting the sacred marks on face and arms—anything and everything. Doubtless these bazaars were originally restricted to the sale of things required for the worship and ceremonies of the temple, but now the sacred place is defiled with the unseemly haggings and quarrels of the common bazaar. Perhaps it was a similar scene that our Lord saw in the temple at Jerusalem, when He drove out those who had made His Father's house a den of thieves.

There are other things to mar the impressiveness of this great temple. Many of the wonderful carved pillars are covered with dirty whitewash, and some of the magnificent colonnades are so infested with bats that the stench is nauseating. It is a place of strange contrasts.

Go when you will, there are always large numbers of worshippers in the temple of Madura. Formal *puja* is performed officially before the two chief shrines five times daily—at 5 and 8 a.m., noon, 6 p.m., and midnight—but it is not limited to these hours. Every evening the scene is singularly weird and impressive: the temple courts and halls seethe with worshippers, and the great brass arch over the "Door of a Thousand Lights" blazes with innumerable lamps.

This vast temple is one of the largest and most imposing in the world. South India has at least one larger, but none more impressive in general appearance. There are similar shrines at Tinnevely, Trichinopoli, Ramesvaram, Tanjore, Conjeeveram, and many other places. North India has no temples that can compare with them.

### The Great Hindu Festivals

Like all the great temples, Madura is the scene of many festivals. Small ones are held on ten days of every month, and four times a year there are special festivals on a very large scale. On these great occasions pilgrims gather from all parts of South India—their numbers sometimes running into hundreds of thousands—and the idols are drawn round the town on huge decorated cars, hundreds of worshippers pulling the ropes.

One such festival is held at the January full moon. That day the god and goddess are drawn on their cars to a very beautiful sacred tank two miles away. The tank is a large square sheet of water, almost exactly the same area as the Madura temple, surrounded with low granite walls striped red and white, with wide steps leading down to the water. In the middle of the tank is a square islet with a graceful little pavilion at each corner, and a beautiful white temple rising above the green trees in the centre. The scene, with the islet and its shrines reflected in the water, is one of rare beauty. At the festival, in the presence of vast crowds of people, the idols are placed on a decorated barge and rowed three times round the lake. Then they are carried to the temple in the centre of the islet to enjoy a rest from the heat out of the gaze of the worshipping multitudes. The evening is a time of great excitement. The tank is illuminated with myriads of lamps and there is a display

of fireworks, during which the gods are again pulled round the lake on their barge. The whole ceremony, with the reflections of the lights in the placid water of the lovely tank, is picturesque to a degree; but it appears strange in the eyes of Europeans. To the average Hindu it is a natural and necessary part of his religion.

Such ceremonies are continually taking place all over South India. Every large temple and many smaller ones have one or more every year. Each festival is closely associated with some incident in the life of the god, and it serves to keep the sacred stories in the minds of the people. For example: at Madura the most important festival of the year—held about the end of April—celebrates the marriage of Siva and Minakshi, and the whole wedding ceremony is gone through in one of the large halls of the temple, where, on a big platform, the god and goddess are re-married every year!

These festivals delight the people, and the credulous take them very seriously. The temple-priests encourage them as expressive of popular devotion. But to English visitors it seems childish to think of pleasing a god by pulling his image on a car, rowing it on a boat, giving it a swing, or decorating it with jewels.

### **The Sacred Rivers**

The sacred rivers of India form another striking feature in the religious life of the people. The Hindu imagination has placed the home of the gods far up among the eternal snows of the Himalayas, and the great rivers of the north are regarded as flowing directly from the throne of those gods. First holy "Mother Ganges" with its great tributaries the Jumna and the Gogra, then the mighty Brahmaputra with its course

of 1800 miles, and the Indus with its four tributaries, all flow down from the huge glaciers and snow-fields of that stupendous range of mountains. In the South Indian peninsula are the Nerbudda, Tapti, Godaveri, Kistna, and Kavari—all sacred rivers, and believed by the credulous to have a miraculous subterranean connection with "Mother Ganges," which is the most sacred of all.

These rivers are held to be not merely sacred, but actually divine. The Ganges, for example, is a mighty goddess, and one continually hears the cry, "Gunga ji ki jai!" (To Mother Ganges be victory!) One night, as the train in which the writer was travelling crossed the long bridge over the broad waters of the Godaveri, the people rose from their seats and threw small coins through the carriage windows into the river far below. In response to an enquiry as to the reason, they explained that they were returning safely from a journey and the coins were little thank-offerings to the river-goddess for her protecting care.

At certain seasons there are special pilgrimages to the great rivers, the object being, not to worship in the temple of some particular god, but to receive spiritual benefits from the river itself. To bathe in these rivers means cleansing and salvation, and the more sacred the river the more certain the efficacy of the cleansing. For this reason, great bathing *melas* are held every year at certain specially holy places on these sacred rivers. Whether there is a temple at the place or not really does not matter; *it is the river itself* that is all-important. Such a festival is held yearly at Nasik on the Godaveri; and every twelfth year is a season of unusual power, for at that time, by a miracle, all the holy waters of all the holy rivers of India are believed to converge at

Nasik, and pilgrims bathing there at that time secure all the cleansing and merit and blessing they could otherwise only obtain by going on a separate pilgrimage to every one of the holy rivers in turn.

Every year hundreds of thousands of Hindus go from all parts of India to the Ganges itself. Some of them go to its sacred source high up among the snows; others go to Hardwar, where the river bursts through the rocky defiles and enters the plain; others go to Allahabad where the Ganges and Jumna meet; others to Benares—holiest of all—and still others to Sagar where the beloved river empties its muddy waters into the sea. But besides these world-famous cities, there are great annual bathing *melas* at places probably never heard of by our readers—places of no size or importance whatever save for the all-important fact that they are on “Mother Ganges.”

On one occasion the writer attended a great bathing *mela* at the tiny town of Anapshahr—the very name of which is hardly known to Europeans living a hundred miles away. This festival is held every November full moon. For a week before, strings of six or eight lumbering bullock-carts were seen carrying women and children towards Anapshahr, the men walking alongside. The day before the full moon the roads for miles around were choked with the living streams of people, *ekkas*, *tongas*, camel-carts and all manner of vehicles. It was an amazing spectacle. Every little village *en route* contributed its quota of pilgrims, until the roads became a solid mass of humanity moving slowly towards Mother Ganges. From time to time the familiar cry was raised: “Gunga ji ki jai! Gunga ji ki jai!” Anapshahr was packed to its utmost limits, and all around pilgrims were encamped on every little bit of vacant

ground. That night tens of thousands of tired pilgrims slept by the roadside, under carts, inside carts—anywhere where there was room for them to lie down or sit. It was a great medley of bullocks, ponies, camels, and sleeping people. Yet there was no confusion; more orderly crowds could hardly be imagined.

At dawn, the people flocked down to the bathing place at the river side. The Ganges was unusually low—scarcely more than a third its usual breadth—and the dry bed was covered on both sides, as far as the eye could reach, with pilgrims, tents, booths, stalls, swings, roundabouts, and even a “big wheel.” For the *mela* is a fair as well as a religious festival, and pleasure mingles with devotion. Every one of those two hundred thousand pilgrims bathed in the sacred river. Many hours passed before they all got a turn.

For two days the *mela* continued, and then the crowds began to disperse to their distant villages—they were mostly village people. We stayed on for some hours until most of the people had departed. Then, mounted on our *tam-tam* (a sort of pony cart), we started for a ride of twenty-six miles to the nearest mission station. Again the road was crowded. *Not until we had passed the twelfth milestone was there a single break in that long stream of pilgrims*, and for several miles more there was only an occasional gap. All the way the road was strewn with returning pilgrims, and stragglers were passing for a couple of days afterwards. Yet that was only one of the high-roads leading from the place of bathing. All the other roads would be similarly crowded.

### The Holy Cities

India has numerous holy cities. Besides those already mentioned, there are Muttra and Brindaban sacred to



Krishna, Ajodhya the city of Rama and Hanuman, Puri beloved of Jagannath, and many another. All these have their festivals and claim their hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year. If sacred places could make a land holy, India is holy indeed !

But people whose admiration and love for India do not blind them to her faults know only too well that the "holy" cities are often her most unholy. One of the most repulsive places the writer visited was Brindaban, sacred to the popular god Krishna. In Benares itself, he has seen a procession going through the street in broad daylight, led by a male prostitute. In many of the sacred cities dancing girls abound—all women of evil life : they are closely connected with the temples—and it is in this that vice in India differs from that in the West—obtaining their living even within the temples. They are spoken of as "temple girls," or, officially, as *devadasis*—"servants of the gods": their initiation ceremony takes the form of marriage to the gods. Vice sheltering itself under the cloak of religion—oh, the horror of it ! One of the reasons for child-marriage is the desire to save little girls from the corruption around them. The marvel is that social evils are not greater than they are, and that the overwhelming majority of Indian women are models of wifely fidelity and devotion.

### India's Holy Men

One of the most striking features of Indian life is the way in which thousands of Hindus devote themselves entirely to religion. Leaving home and everything they possess, they become "holy men"—or women—often called fakirs, Sadhus, Sanyasis, Yogis, or some other less familiar name. These ascetics are constantly seen sitting cross-legged by the roadside or at the door

of a shrine, wearing a scanty saffron cloth, their bodies smeared with sacred ashes and daubed with vermilion or yellow paint, their hair, often longer than themselves, hanging in filthy neglected masses or twisted round the head like a big turban. Some of them spend their time in meditation, trying to concentrate their minds on one idea : " I am THAT ! " (*i.e.* " I am part of the Supreme "). Others may be seen torturing themselves by sitting on spikes, or by difficult and painful contortions of the body, or by going on pilgrimages by prostrations (*i.e.* by measuring their length on the ground). Still others take " the long pilgrimage," visiting the four cardinal points of India—the horrible shrine of Kali in Calcutta (East), the source of the Ganges (North), the shrine of Krishna at Dwarka (West), and the shrine of Rama at Ramesvaram (South). It usually takes about half a dozen years to complete this amazing journey. Behind all this self-sacrifice there is the idea of acquiring merit and so reducing the number of future existences, or of pleasing the gods to secure their favour, and of finding spiritual rest and peace. To some of the better minds it is, in a very real sense, a search for God. These ascetics are estimated to number many millions, but it is to be feared that thousands of them are lazy fellows who impose upon the charity of the pious.

#### What is Hinduism ?

How shall we estimate the amazing religious zeal of India ? Perhaps it is impossible for mortal man to do so. All kinds of motives tend to make men practise religion in one way or another. Fear and custom, as well as deeper motives, play their part ; and one suspects that nowadays the holiday element and the love of pleasure and excitement are also powerful influences.

At a *mela*, the fair and the roundabouts are as conspicuous as the ceremonial bathing; to the simple villagers it is a glorious picnic, long looked forward to and enjoyed to the full. And people who have known India for many years (both Indians and foreigners) declare that the picnic element is increasing rapidly—that the tendency is to more pleasure and less *puja*. And it is said on every hand that the crowds are smaller than formerly. But when all allowance is made, it remains true that the Hindus are the most religious people on the face of the earth.

And what are the outstanding ideas of this great religion? At the back of all there is a more or less vague conception of an "All-Soul"—a Supreme Being, the great Brahm who has no second; "Brahm is All, All is Brahm." Around this vague, mysterious, impersonal Being profound philosophies are woven, and a pantheistic philosophy is the religion of the deep thinkers of India. There are no idols or pictures of Brahm, and no temples are built for his worship.

Brahm is held to have manifested himself in three forms: as BRAHMA (the Creator), as VISHNU (the Preserver), and as SRVA (the Destroyer and Reproducer). The last two of these are believed to have had different incarnations and manifestations. They had wives—who were goddesses—and children, who in turn became gods and goddesses. The popular idea is that the gods now number 330,000,000.

One great Hindu doctrine is that of the "transmigration of souls"—a belief that the human soul passes through many thousands of existences in this world, dwelling in animals, reptiles, insects, and birds, as well as in human bodies. And this is closely related to a belief in *Karma*.

(fate or retribution) : what a man does in one existence determines his life in future existences. Trouble, pain, and loss in the present life are the inevitable retribution for evil deeds in a previous one, and prosperity and happiness are the rewards of good actions. Conduct here affects the hereafter.

### Do Hindus "Worship" Their Idols?

But what about the idols? Do the Hindus *really worship the images*? There is every reason to suppose that the ignorant, credulous masses—the multi-millions of India—do actually worship the idols. A little talk with the unsophisticated villagers will convince the enquirer that this is the case. Many converts to Christianity declare that they themselves did so before their conversion. A Brahmin convert, now a Christian minister, well known to the writer, is very explicit on this point. But many millions of Hindus are too thoughtful for such crude notions, and they hold that the idol is not actually the god but *only the representation* of the god; they do not pray *to* the idol but *only before* the idol. In other words, when they worship, they have the image before them to remind them of the god they cannot see. Beyond question, this is the attitude of all thoughtful Hindus.

To reflective Hindus it is obvious that although there are millions of idols of Krishna or Rama, there is *only one* Krishna and *only one* Rama. Such men will sometimes draw an illustration from the Roman Catholic Church. "Catholics have many thousands of images of Christ and Mary," they say; "do they therefore believe that there are thousands of Christs and thousands of Marys? Certainly not. Even so, we Hindus believe that there is only one Krishna, though there may be

millions of idols to represent him." Some of these men will go further and assert that Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, Krishna and Kali, Rama and Sita, Ganesha and all the other gods are really only different *manifestations of the one supreme Brahm*, and represent him in different aspects.

Such men usually defend the use of idols as aids to worship, on the ground that the common people cannot rise to abstract truth and need the concrete visible image to help them to worship the Unseen. "Idols," they say, "are only object lessons for the ignorant masses." Certain it is that by the idols and the ceremonies the temple-priests have their living!

Yet there remains the great fact that the outstanding characteristic of India is her devotion to the gods she reveres.

## CHAPTER VII

### INDIA'S BOYS AND GIRLS

BESIDE the lovely sacred tank at Madura<sup>1</sup> stands a small temple to the goddess Parvati. It is a favourite shrine (one of many) for people whose hearts crave for children—especially for sons—and they gather to this sacred spot as earnestly as Hannah visited the temple of the Lord in Shiloh. With the sacrifice of a goat they present to their goddess a little wooden cradle—an *empty* cradle—as a pathetic plea that the goddess will grant their desire. And if, in due time, their hearts are gladdened by the birth of a little one, the joyful parents repair once more to this temple to give thanks, bringing, as a token of their gratitude, a small clay figure of a child. The flat roof of the temple is literally packed with hundreds of these figures.

Let no one imagine for a moment that in India children are unwelcomed and neglected. No gift is more earnestly desired from the gods.

#### Infancy and Childhood

In the village dwelling one may see the baby in his cradle—a basket suspended by ropes from a rafter in the roof. Such a cradle is convenient, for it is easily rocked—indeed, baby can rock himself as he kicks about—and in it he is comparatively safe from snakes!

Most Indian parents lavish a wealth of affection upon

<sup>1</sup> See p. 99.

their children, and the stranger cannot fail to observe the tenderness with which they are usually treated even by the poorest outcastes. One of the most frequent and pleasing of street sights, especially in the south of India, is a fond father carrying the baby out for an airing—sauntering proudly along the high road or through the bazaar with the little one in his arms, or, if the child is old enough, straddled across one hip. Now pause for a moment and smile at the baby; immediately the father's face becomes radiant! In a crowded third-class railway carriage one has sometimes taken some little notice of a scrap of brown humanity on a mother's lap, and has suddenly become conscious of being on a friendly footing with the entire company in that compartment. The quickest way to the Indian heart is via the children, although it is not wise for a stranger to *touch* a child without the parents' consent..

As the baby grows bigger and stronger, and consciousness dawns, the devoted mother coos over her darling like the mothers of any other country. Tiny hands reach out and seize mother's big nose ring (often a hoop of gold wire two or three inches in diameter) until she is obliged to remove that attractive plaything and substitute a sort of little stud that baby fingers cannot pull. In India it is very noticeable that one seldom hears a little child crying.

The parents' hearts are often possessed with a great fear lest some sickness they are powerless to resist should steal their treasure from them—especially if the child is a boy. Against such evils the Indian mother feels helpless. She is unacquainted with the simplest remedies, and—if there be no Government dispensary or medical mission within reach—is dependent upon the gods and the village barber. The parents vow that if the gods will

spare their child through the sicknesses of infancy they will go on pilgrimage to some holy city or sacred river, and at a great festival will cut his hair for the first time and present it as an offering! A missionary friend told the writer of a little boy, just able to toddle, being brought to the dispensary for treatment. The whole body was covered with dreadful boils, and the head was so bad that it was impossible to put down the tip of a finger without touching one. Would the mother allow the boy's hair to be cut off in order that the boils on the head might be properly treated? Oh, no! *that* could not be thought of; the poor mother had lost six or seven children in infancy, and in despair she had pledged the hair of this one to the sacred Ganges. What hope of help from that mighty river goddess if the child's hair was cut off by the English lady? It was a question of the hair or the child's life, and the missionary pleaded earnestly. It was in vain; the mother took the child home. But in a day or two she returned to the dispensary and yielded, saying pathetically: "You may use the scissors if you must, but give the hair to me." The hair was cut off and carefully wrapped up in paper, and a few months later it was taken to Anapshahr and duly presented to the river goddess.

Many a tiny toddler runs about naked all through the hot day, and then, in the chilly nights of the cold season in North India, takes a chill and pneumonia sets in. What can the agonized mother do? Perhaps a monkey swings itself down from the roof and enters the house, and the child, chasing it, is badly bitten on hand or leg. Or perchance a pot of boiling water on the little fire-place upsets, and the child is scalded. What *can* the mother do? A cow-dung poultice is about the best



remedy she can think of—or maybe the village barber suggests something else, perhaps something worse. We have heard of sore eyes being rubbed with powdered glass . . . and those little eyes were closed for ever. It was not that the parent or the barber meant to be cruel—it was only ignorance, not wickedness. That poor mother's heart was yearning to relieve the little one, and she used the only remedy suggested to her. Would to God there were a mission hospital within reach of every village in the land !

### The Play-Age

If the children survive all the sicknesses of infancy—and the “remedies”—they speedily reach the play-age, and no children love play more than the boys and girls of India. In the villages most of them are not troubled with much clothing, and many run about merrily in the warm sunshine dressed in a bracelet or a tiny little lead and glass ornament suspended from a string. Some of them have a small vest that scarcely covers their little brown chests ; others wear a loin-cloth, and a few have more ample clothing. Some little girls wear a short skirt, which, in the South, is exchanged for a *sari* as they grow older. Usually Indian children are sturdy little people, with well-formed limbs, and sparkling eyes and pearly teeth ; they are always ready for fun and as playful as kittens. With soft, wondering eyes these little brown mites stand and gaze at the stranger who enters their village. They are timid at first, but when kindly smiles assure them that we are friends they gather eagerly around with radiant faces. No one can be in India long without learning to love the boys and girls.

The poorest children—like their brothers and sisters,



Photo by the Author

### HIGH-CASTE GIRLS AT SCHOOL

*Photographed in the courtyard of a mission school at Kharja, U.P., North India. The girls were dressed in beautifully coloured silk garments bordered with silver-lincol trimming, and wore a good deal of jewelry. Note their ink-pots and wooden slates.*



of an English slum—have little enough in the way of toys ; but mud and leaves and sticks are plentiful, and soon little fingers learn to make clay figures and all sorts of things as children will. And it does not matter how dirty they make themselves—the dust and mud will soon wash off. Quite early even outcaste children learn to plait dry grass and make little toys for themselves. With dry straw and a few seeds or little stones the older children make capital rattles for the babies, of whom they are very fond. Nothing can exceed the tenderness of girls for their little brothers ; they look after them and play with them with greatest devotion, calling them by endearing names and generally acting as little mothers.

Most Indian children have a few simple toys. Parents, or older brothers and sisters, returning from a journey or from a festival, will not fail to bring home some little thing for the children. Playthings can always be seen on the stalls in the bazaar : curious rag dolls, clay or wood balls, pretty little toys of painted wood, crude drums—just clay bowls covered over with parchment—and little jumping figures. These simple toys delight the heart of an Indian child, and even English children do not despise them. Or perhaps the gift consists of a small bracelet, made of green or blue glass or of composition covered with tinsel ; or it may be a handful of monkey-nuts or sweets.

The sweetmeat stall has just the same attraction for Indian children that the toffee shop has for little people at home, and when someone has given them a *pice* (a farthing)—or perchance even an *anna* (a penny)—they run happy and breathless to the bazaar, holding tightly the treasured coin, to buy some of the sticky luxuries on the sweet-stall. The writer remembers

lingering sometimes about such stalls to see the childish glee with which the little ones rushed up and almost climbed on the stall in their eagerness. And it was noticeable that the kind-faced dealer did not drive very hard bargains with his youthful customers.

Swinging is a familiar pastime, especially in the month of *Sawan* (the end of June and early July), when practically every house in some parts of the country has a swing fitted up under the veranda or under a tree—just a simple rope with a board for a seat. The women and older girls join the little ones in the frolic, sitting two on a swing (facing one another), and singing as they swing to and fro.

There are times when the children are naughty. If the offence be not very serious the little offender will be made to put his hands together and beg pardon. Then very often the parent will say, "*Kān ko pakarlo!*" (Take hold of your ears!) and then, while the frightened youngster is doing so, the command comes, "Now say you won't do it again!"—a promise readily given and, we fear, as speedily forgotten. Sometimes the parent, usually in a fit of temper, spansks the child, and then, when the youngster cries, gives it a *pice* to go and buy some sweets! In this way the whole idea of discipline and training is destroyed. There is no thought of controlling the child and insisting on obedience. The punishment over, the indulgent parents' chief thought is to stop the crying—they cannot bear to see their little ones crying. Thus between spanking and spoiling the boys and girls grow up self-willed and passionate, sadly lacking that self-discipline so necessary for the duties of life.

Indeed, for Indian children there is little or nothing of what we in England regard as character-training:

Most parents simply do not understand it; it is entirely beyond their horizon. Girls are taught the duty of obedience and faithfulness to their husbands, and, particularly in the United Provinces, the beautiful and noble goddess Sita is held up before them as an example to be followed. The boys are taught the importance of loyalty to their caste and caste-rules, but this hardly reaches to the level of character-training as we understand it. Too often the moral atmosphere of the village is unwholesome, and even in the home the ordinary conversation is very coarse. At a very early age there is a lack of innocence, and a precocity which is distressing to those brought up in a Christian home in the West. There is, of course, a measure of religious instruction. While quite young the children are taught to worship the idols—both at home and in the temples. Between the ages of eight and twelve the high caste boy is initiated into the Hindu faith, and with solemn ceremony the sacred thread of the "twice born" is put on. But this religious teaching does not amount to character-training, for in Hinduism religion has far too little relation to morals.

#### At Work

At quite an early age Indian children take some part in the simple duties of the home. In the courtyard the tiny girls polish with red earth the brass vessels that are the pride of the Indian household, and soon learn to husk the grain, to roll the spices for the curry, and to make the *chapatties*. When the women take their big water-pots to the village well, two or three little girls with their smaller vessels may be seen tripping beside them, and, when the vessels have been filled, they enjoy the fun of learning to balance them upon

their heads as their mothers do. Indian children are very imitative ; they walk behind their elders in single file and copy their actions—often with an air of business-like seriousness that is very amusing. Many of them soon become more like miniature men and women than children. They are given responsibility at quite an early age, and accept it as a matter of course.

The boys help their fathers in various ways, and in the country both boys and girls work in the fields, or take the goats out to the jungle in the morning and drive them back to the village through clouds of dust at sunset. It is no unusual thing for a little boy of nine or ten to be in charge of a herd of buffaloes.<sup>1</sup> This sounds romantic, but it is no light responsibility for one so young, and not infrequently the boys have to defend their herds from wild animals—a task that calls for no little courage and wit. An English resident tells of seeing a boy about eight or nine years old lead his buffaloes down to drink at the Nerbudda River. As they approached it, the boy's sharp eyes detected three little black spots on the surface of the water ; they were only like pin-points, but they indicated the presence of a crocodile. Without fuss or excitement the little fellow quickly drove his herd back to a safe distance, and then sat down to watch while the crocodile came out of the water at the very spot where he and the buffaloes had been only a few moments before. When the disappointed crocodile departed, the boy coolly brought his charges

<sup>1</sup> The Indian domestic " buffalo," often called the " water buffalo " because of its habit of standing in a pond with only its nose visible above the surface. It is a dark grey animal with powerful horns ; it is about the size of a cow, and very ugly. There is a common story that when God had made the world and everything therein, He said to man, " Now you make something." Man tried to do so, and the result was a water buffalo !

back to the water. What boy of nine years old in this country would be able to do such a thing? It is truly marvellous what wise little old men and women these Indian children are!

As the children grow, responsibilities increase and childhood, with its playfulness and sweet innocence, passes away all too quickly.

### Red-letter Days

Birthdays are unknown to Indian children—very few people in India know precisely when they were born—and, of course, there is nothing quite corresponding to the Western Christmas. But there are numerous festivals that provide interest and amusement, and the boys and girls find life by no means dull. Occasionally, for instance, some great Indian prince will have a torchlight procession, with richly-decorated elephants and camels and soldiers. How the children's eyes sparkle at such sights!

Most of the festivals are connected with the worship of the gods. Sometimes it is a big procession in which the huge decorated idol cars are pulled round the town by hundreds of men, while the children squeeze through the crowds or crawl under someone's legs to get a better view. Sometimes there are illuminations and fireworks and Bengal lights, as at the *Dewali*<sup>1</sup> (the Feast of Lights) when all the houses are newly whitewashed and lit up with tiny lamps placed in earthenware jars with coloured papers over them. At the stalls in the market people buy little model houses of clay or paper, and place them in their windows, or on the front veranda, with lights inside. A stroll through the streets on the night of that festival is full of interest, and naturally enough

<sup>1</sup> Called the *Deepavali* in South India.



the youngsters have a great time. Unfortunately this feast is closely connected with gambling, which Government permits for two nights, and not a few children first learn to gamble on this occasion.

Another festival, the *Navaratri*, or Ninth Night, is, in South India, to some extent a children's festival. All available dolls and toys are displayed, the women, as well as the children, taking great pride in making an imposing show. Some families carefully keep the collection of dolls for display year after year, just as we put our Christmas lanterns away for future use.

Often the bigger children are taken to a *mela* like the one described in the preceding chapter.<sup>1</sup> As they ride along the great high roads (sometimes for several days), they laugh and joke and wave their sticks and sing like Lancashire Sunday-school children at a Whit-week outing. And at the *mela* there are swings and roundabouts and big wheels, not to mention the bangle sellers and fruit stalls and the sugar canes! It is the nearest approach to a summer holiday these children know, and they thoroughly enjoy it. At such a *mela* many a boy has used one of his *pice* to buy a little book, which he carefully takes home to read. That little book is a "one pice Gospel." Possibly it is the first time he learns anything about the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Weddings and What They Mean

But perhaps the greatest excitement of all is a wedding. Sometimes the ceremonies and the feasting last for several days and are carried on on a scale that throws the families concerned into debt that requires years of toil to wipe out. Even if they are only spectators, the children enjoy it—for the procession at the taking

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 102-3.

of the bride to her new home is picturesque to a degree. She is carried in a decorated palanquin—covered up, of course—while the bridegroom rides upon a horse or even an elephant. The guests are dressed in their gayest clothing; and there are flaming torches and bands and dancing as the procession moves forward at a snail's pace.

Of course the children revel in it, and especially if it happens to be in their own family—or even, perchance, their own wedding! What can be more exciting for an Indian boy or girl than to be married—to be dressed in wonderful silks and embroidery, and covered with jewels, to be feasted and made the centre of the ceremony? To their childish minds marriage means little more than a great entertainment.

The wedding, outwardly so full of display and happiness, often brings the greatest shadow upon the child-life of India. The general rule is for Hindu girls to be married before they are twelve years old. In many cases the marriage ceremony takes place much earlier—not infrequently, even in infancy. The last published Government figures—those for the 1911 Census<sup>1</sup>—show the following startling condition:—

302,000	little wives	under 5 years old
2,219,000	„ „	between 5 and 10
6,555,000	„ „	„ 10 and 15

In many parts of India one sees in the streets little girls—sometimes *very* little—with a circular red mark on the forehead, or a red line running up the parting of the hair. This means that the little one is married. Whatever the age of the girl, the marriage—or even the betrothal—is *absolutely irrevocable* for her. The boy

<sup>1</sup> The complete analysed figures for the 1921 census are not yet available.

may die, or develop some disease, or he may go blind, before the marriage is consummated. It makes no difference: the little girl is bound to him for good or evil; the betrothal cannot be broken, nor the marriage set aside, and there is no divorce in Hinduism. If the boy dies, the little "wife" becomes *a widow for life*, although she may be only four or five years old! The Census returns on the subject of child-widowhood are truly terrible:—

17,703	widows	under	5	years	old
94,270	"	between	5	and	10
223,042	"	"	10	"	15

Many high-minded Hindu reformers view this state of things with concern.

The child wife usually continues to live with her parents until she is about ten or twelve years of age. Then she is taken to her husband's home and lives with him as his wife. The trying conditions of the joint family system mean that the newcomer is placed—perhaps with several sisters-in-law of varying age—under the control of her husband's mother. To a little girl of such tender years this is a great hardship. She naturally feels keenly the separation from her own fond parents, and cries pitifully in the loneliness of her new surroundings. And it must be confessed that in only too many cases she does not receive from her mother-in-law the love and affection she has been accustomed to in her own home. She cries for her mother, and then is scolded and beaten.

Frequently child-marriage means child-motherhood—and perhaps an early death in consequence. All who truly love India must be deeply pained by this threefold shadow that rests upon the girlhood of the land—child-marriage, child-motherhood, and child-widowhood—a

triple problem which Indian reformers will have to deal with very seriously. To this dark list of evils, yet another must be added—the practice of a middle-aged or even an old widower being re-married to a *child wife*!

### School Life

From very early ages India has had schools carried on in accordance with Indian ideas. To-day most villages have a school of sorts, in which the village schoolmaster imparts some little knowledge to a few boys. If they are Brahmin boys they study Sanskrit, and learn to read and write the sacred characters. A great deal of time is given to memorizing sections of the Vedas or other sacred books. But these schools are of the old order, and are passing away before the steady advance of education on Western lines.

In thousands of villages there are now little mission schools in which Indian teachers give elementary instruction. In some cases the tiny children learn to write their letters in the dust on the ground, writing with a bit of stick or with the fingers. In other schools wooden slates are used, on which the boys and girls write in a black pigment with a reed pen. It must be confessed that many of these elementary village schools are not as efficient as we could wish, and often the children are taken away from school and put to work before they have made much headway.

Much more satisfactory work is done in the scores of secondary and High Schools now sprinkled over the land. Some of these are Government schools, and others are the result of private or municipal enterprise. Sometimes a wealthy Indian gentleman will build a handsome school and place it under the direction of a local committee or under the Municipal Board. But very many

of these schools are Mission institutions, organized and superintended by Christian missionaries and their helpers. It has been the writer's privilege to visit many such schools, and in almost every case he has been delighted with the efficiency with which they are carried on. Many of his happiest hours in India were spent in visiting these splendid institutions.

In many mission schools there are now Scout Companies—a feature of school life as dear to the heart of the Indian boy as to his British brothers. The Scout Movement is unquestionably doing a fine work in India, and its spirit of comradeship and service is making a very deep impression. The Girl Guide Movement is only in its infancy in India, but this, too, has unquestionably a great future. But in spite of all that is being done the schools of India are wholly insufficient for the needs of so vast a country, and are only touching the fringe of the problem.

. . . . .

Of the myriad interests of India nothing fascinated the writer so much as the boys and girls. To join happy Indian school children at play-time, to have them crowding around, playfully pulling one's coat or slipping their hands over one's eyes, to have little brown hands ransacking one's pockets and pulling out a penknife, a bunch of keys or a watch (the small children love to "see the wheels go round"!)—these are happy memories that can never be forgotten by one who loves the boys and girls of India.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INDIA IN TRANSITION

#### The Island City

STAND on the top of far-famed Malabar Hill and look down upon the island city of Bombay with its population of nearly a million souls. The scene has none of the true Indian fascination. Northward, as far as the eye can reach, the great city stretches for something like twenty-eight square miles, bristling with factory chimneys instead of graceful minarets, and having more cotton mills than temples. There is little here to suggest the India described in the previous chapters of this book.

Let us drive along a few roads in the fashionable suburb on and around the Malabar Hill. Here are the residences of numerous Europeans and the mansions and villas of wealthy Indian gentlemen—lit with electric light and fitted with electric fans and telephones.

Now jump on the electric car and travel for a short distance along broad well-kept roads, past splendid public buildings, to the port. Bombay harbour is the largest and finest in India. Its busy docks, offices, and Custom-house give the immediate impression of a great port. Out on the calm waters, the ships of many nations lie at anchor, and, if it is Saturday, there is sure to be a big P. & O. liner at the landing-stage.

But beside being the chief port, Bombay is an industrial city, with great factories and cotton mills and railway works. It is the Manchester as well as the

Liverpool of India. One day I stood upon the topmost rampart of an old fortification and looked out upon a wide panorama of workshops, interspersed with a few surviving palm trees that stand like relics of a bygone age. Twenty-four hours earlier I had been in a little village, far away in the Marathi country, watching the village folk weaving cloth on their primitive hand-loom arranged down the old-world street! Centuries seemed to lie between that quiet scene and the whirling machinery of the Bombay mills. Truly, India is in transition.

Many of the mills and engineering workshops of Bombay are well equipped with the latest machines, and appear to be as airy and as sanitary as those of the British Isles; though, in the hot season, the heat is necessarily intense. Bare-footed Indian toilers—both men and women, and, alas, sadly too many children—go about their varied duties quietly and diligently. The women maintain a dignified reserve in the presence of the male workers, and more than one manager told the writer that not the slightest trouble accrues from the mixing of the sexes.

Nor is Bombay the only industrial centre. In the beautiful city of Madras—that queen city of the South, whose wide avenues and tropical gardens give one a sense of spaciousness—even there great mills and industrial undertakings are multiplying.

### Industrial Bengal

At Serampore, near Calcutta, there is a half-ruined temple in which, more than a century ago, William Carey and Henry Martyn were wont to meet for converse and prayer. Standing on that spot to-day one may look across the wide yellow waters of the Hoogli, and see a sight these noble pioneers never dreamed of—a

long line of factories and jute mills stretching away city-wards for miles. Calcutta itself, which, with its suburbs, has a population of some 1,230,000, has extensive industrial quarters and a growing industrial population.

Two hundred miles away is Raniganj—a little country town—Indian enough in itself, but surrounded with a ring of paper mills, potteries, and coal mines whose tall shafts and wheels, and huge tips of earth and black rubbish, make one rub one's eyes with amazement. Surely this is Wigan, not the picturesque Orient! That coal-field stretches out to the west for an area of not less than 500 square miles. In 1887 the Bengal coal-fields yielded 900,000 tons; in 1911 the output was nearly 11,500,000 tons. The miners are, of course, Indians, but most mines have a little colony of about a dozen European overseers with their wives.

Of Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, and many another manufacturing centre, there is no need to speak. Beyond doubt industrialism, with all it implies, has come to stay. In 1918 there were in India 3318 factories registered under the Factory Act—an increase of 1100 in ten years! Some of them are owned by Indian and others by European firms. They employ 897,000 men, 161,000 women, and 64,000 children. These factories are under Government inspection, and much has been done to secure improved sanitary and moral conditions and to safeguard the interests of the workers. In most of them there is a weekly day of rest—Sunday, Friday, or some other day.

### The Perils of Industrialism

One of the chief dangers of industrial development is the overcrowding that so often accompanies it. In



Bombay the conditions are terrible. All is very different from the picturesque bazaars of the true Indian cities one sees up country. There are narrow, evil-smelling streets and squalid courts, with ramshackle tenement houses, three or four stories high, shutting out light and air. In 1918 there were, in Bombay alone, 166,337 occupied one-room tenements, with an average of 4.47 persons per room. No less than 76 per cent of the population were living in one-room tenements! The *Times of India* declared that it was "no unusual thing to find fifteen or twenty people, of both sexes, huddled together on the floor of a single room in a stifling atmosphere and a vile stench." The infant mortality was 454 per thousand. Plague and influenza take heavy toll in these densely-crowded quarters. Unhappily the city population is constantly increasing, for from time to time famine drives the wretched people of the country districts to seek refuge, and perchance work, in the great towns. Away up country the writer has seen trains so crammed with hungry people making for Bombay that it was impossible to squeeze more in, and a dozen or two were left behind on every wayside station to wait for the next train—next day! A guard told me that some had to wait three or four days before they managed to get in. Thus simple country folk are gathered into the slums of the great city.

Industrialism brings other perils. Already there is strife between capital and labour—intensified in many instances because the one is white and the other brown, and labour problems are embittered by the prejudice of race and colour. The day of trade unionism has dawned, and already strikes are a familiar experience. There were nearly two hundred strikes up and down India during 1920—some of them being of considerable

importance. While the writer was in Bombay a great strike of post-office employees was in progress, and it completely dislocated the postal system for some weeks. In these difficult days certain politicians are constantly striving to work labour disputes to serve their own ends.

This is New India, or—to be more accurate—one aspect of it. Happily there are more pleasing aspects.

### Among India's Students

Elementary education throughout India is in a very undeveloped state, but higher education has made great progress in recent years. Already India has nine Universities,<sup>1</sup> and every large city has at least one College. There are more students in India than there are in England and Wales, and even more striking is the fact that, per thousand of the population, more people are receiving College education in India than in the homeland.

To visit some of the great educational centres is a revelation. The Universities and most of the Colleges are splendid institutions. The teaching staffs include European, American, and Indian professors and lecturers, but all the instruction is given in the English language, so that educated Indians may have full access to all the literature and scholarship of the English-speaking races. The subjects taught in these Colleges include arts, science, literature, law, medicine, engineering, commerce, teaching, agriculture, and forestry, according to the special purpose of the particular College. The scene in the light airy lecture-rooms strikes the Western visitor as singularly picturesque. Many of the students—especially in Bengal—wear Indian garments ; on many a face is the gleaming

<sup>1</sup> Viz. Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Allahabad, Punjab (Lahore), Patna, Mysore, Benares (Hindu University), and Aligarh (Moslem University). Others are projected.

white or red mark of a Hindu god, and here and there among the hundreds of round cloth skull-caps and turbans a red fez is noticeable—a sure sign of a Mohammedan. In some classes the lecturer himself may be wearing the flowing garments and bulky turban still dear to the average Brahmin.

The largest College in India is a missionary institution—the great Christian College, Madras, in which six different missionary societies unite in giving a sound University education to Indian youths. This splendid pile of buildings, with stately towers and turrets rising above its halls and pillared façades and hostels, stands on the Esplanade, beside the High Court of Madras. It is an institution of which the whole city has cause to be proud. In addition to a number of Indian tutors and lecturers, it has about a dozen European professors, and there are usually from eight hundred to nine hundred students, all of whom are working for the degrees of the Madras University—the course of study being closely modelled on those of the British Universities. Walk round the corridors and see the men grinding at mathematics, or political economy, or physics; visit the well-equipped biological or chemical laboratories and watch the students working out their experiments. In one room a professor is lecturing on the Renaissance in Europe, and in another the students are poring over the Sermon on the Mount, or listening to an exposition of the message of Isaiah or Amos and its application to the present age. In the evening there are many activities; the whole College is ablaze with electric light, and electric fans keep the rooms reasonably cool. Some men may be seen studying in the library, where seven thousand volumes are at their disposal. In one room, the Debating Club is discussing “The Relationship of Caste to Social

Service," and in another the Christian Union is in session. Visit the six college hostels, and look into a few of the small bedroom-studies: in some, the occupants are lying on the simple beds reading Shakespeare or Milton, Green's *Short History* or Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. In another room a student is sitting at the little table "swotting" for his inter-science exam.

In all missionary Colleges the Bible is a regular class book; but Government educational institutions are strictly secular and give no religious instruction—for the Government of India is pledged to religious neutrality. In Benares, the most important College is a Hindu institution, and the Mohammedans have now a large University of their own at Aligarh near Agra: both of these are run on practically the same educational lines as the other Universities.

In all, India has about two hundred and ten colleges giving University education, and more than sixty-four thousand men are studying in them. In addition, many thousands of young Indians (at the risk of breaking caste by crossing "the black water") visit foreign lands to continue their studies in the great Universities of the West. The majority of these come to England, and at the present time there are something like fifteen hundred in this country. Unfortunately their coming to the West is not an unmixed good, for they see a great deal of the darker side of a civilization that is far from Christian, and often have little or no opportunity of seeing the quiet beauty of the true home life of Britain.

But the educational system of India has several very serious defects. It is decidedly top-heavy, for the higher education is out of all proportion to the elementary work. The lower classes and many of the middle class are largely illiterate. Of the 160 million males only

about 17 millions can read and write, and of the 153 millions of females less than 2 millions reach this standard of literacy.

Another weakness of the higher educational system is that very large numbers of the men who go to college take the literary course in the belief that it will lead to Government service or to the legal profession. The result is that the number of Arts students vastly exceeds the possibilities of employment, and many have difficulty in finding a sphere of work. There is urgent need for developing technical and vocational education such as will fit the students for the practical purposes of life.

#### Colleges for Indian Women

But what of higher education for Indian women? In this direction, it must be confessed, very little progress has been made. It is true that there are now sixteen Colleges for women, but these have only about twelve hundred students all told, a terribly low figure when we remember that there are 153 millions of women in the country. Already there are a number of Indian women graduates, and in 1921 Miss Satyapriya Ghosh, M.B., of Calcutta, passed the final examination for the Diploma of Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (F.R.C.S.)—the first Indian woman to attain this distinction.

Of the Colleges for women, perhaps the most interesting and best-known is the United Christian College for Women in Madras, established in 1915. Twelve missionary societies of Britain and America unite in maintaining this really splendid institution, which is housed in first-class buildings, situated in a large and beautiful compound. The College staff consists of ten women graduates (British, American, and Indian) and

five Indian tutors. It is one of the most efficiently staffed missionary institutions in all India. The subjects include mathematics, physics, logic, natural science, chemistry, botany, history (ancient and modern), philosophy, economics, English, Latin, French, and all the four great South Indian languages. The College has separate laboratories for botany, zoology, chemistry, and physics. It is affiliated to the University of Madras, and provides a complete course for the Intermediate and B.A. examinations, so that no student need leave the compound for any part of her instruction. During the last three years twenty students have graduated. It is an inspiration to see the bright-faced students of this College sitting at the latest-pattern American desks in the lecture rooms, taking copious notes of the lectures, or to see them tripping gracefully along the pillared verandas to their private studies, kept as daintily as those at Girton or Newnham. Nearly all the students in this College are the daughters of Indian Christians—a fact full of promise for the future of the Church.

#### **Missionaries and Education**

It will be seen that Christian missionaries are taking no mean part in the education of India. In truth, they were the pioneers, and education has ever been a leading feature of their programme. So early as 1787 the noble German missionary, Schwartz, had a group of schools in South India, and in 1818 William Carey and his colleagues founded their great college at Serampore, near Calcutta. Then came three Scottish educational missionaries—Alexander Duff of Calcutta (1830), Wilson of Bombay, and Anderson of Madras—each of whom founded a great educational institution. From that time missionaries of all Churches have recognized the importance of

education on Christian lines, and a recent Government of India Blue Book (1921) says concerning elementary education : " The work of the various Christian Missionary Societies in giving education to Panchamas (the outcastes) is beyond praise."

### The Changes Resulting from Education

One of the pioneers of Western education in India was the Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who was greatly influenced by Carey. Though remaining a Hindu, he was impressed with the teaching of the New Testament, and in 1820 he wrote a book entitled, *The Principles of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*. Gathering around him a company of men who could no longer assent to all the doctrines of Hinduism, he founded a new sect called the Brahmo Samaj, which was a reformed Hinduism strongly impregnated with Christian ideas. Idolatry with all its attendant superstition, the sacrifice of animals, child-marriage, and the burning of widows, were denounced. Ram Mohan Roy's great successor, Keshab Chandra Sen, came even nearer to Christianity, and his lectures to his followers contained not a few exhortations to follow and revere Christ. One of these lectures concluded with the notable words : " None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved the glorious diadem of India's crown : and He shall have it."

Other men, driven from the old positions by education, found refuge in a different direction. Sweeping away all idolatry as unworthy of educated men, they sought to return to the purer faith of Vedic times.<sup>1</sup> Taking the name of the Arya Samaj, they utterly rejected the teaching of Christ, and to-day they are characterized by a most bitter hatred of Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 23-5.

Towards the close of last century another great movement manifested itself among educated Hindus—a tendency to revive orthodox Hinduism and to reject all modern reform movements. A learned young Bengali of this school of thought, Swami Vivekananda by name, went to Chicago in 1893 to represent India at the Parliament of Religions, and he attracted a good deal of attention by his enthusiastic eulogies of Hinduism. He defended Hinduism as a deeply spiritual faith, of immense value, and of the highest possibilities for development—a faith that must in no wise be surrendered to the materialism of the West. But his Hinduism was not that of the masses of his fellow-countrymen. He took a modern view, for example, of idols, but he urged that idols should be retained for the edification of the ordinary people—suggesting, however, more artistic images in place of the crude and often repulsive figures in common use. Thus Neo-Hinduism has become a real force with thousands of educated men, and the majority of India's students are more or less attracted to this position.

In Mohammedan circles also, education has wrought its silent but important changes. Indian Moslems who have studied in the great Universities and Colleges remain true Moslems, but have a wider horizon and a fresher outlook than their less enlightened compatriots. Such men as Sir Amir Ali and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan exerted a powerful influence, and the great Mohammedan college at Aligarh (now the Aligarh University), became the centre of a Mohammedan forward movement known as the Aligarh Movement. There is a tendency on the part of conservative and reactionary Moslems to blame the "Moslem Modernists" for the evils that shadow the "House of Islam," as the Mohammedan world is termed.



The Modernists have not been slow to retort that it is not themselves, but the conservatives, who, by their narrowness and bigotry, are clogging the wheels of progress and making Islam weak.

#### **New Ideals of Social Service**

Beside its influence on religious thought, education has powerfully affected social ideals and has set in operation movements that indicate new life pulsating through the community. Educated men have their eyes opened to many evils and abuses around them, and they loudly demand reforms. There is a firm insistence on the urgent necessity for developing educational institutions from the elementary village school to the University. The education of girls is urged as a pressing and imperative necessity. The evils of the seclusion of women, child-marriage, perpetual widowhood, and the presence of prostitutes in the temples are condemned with more or less earnestness.

There is also a marked weakening of the more rigid and irksome rules of caste. In the schools and colleges the boys and young men of different castes intermingle. Where boarding accommodation is provided it is usual for them to live in separate hostels, to have their food cooked separately and in accordance with the rules of their various castes, and to eat separately. But in the class-room, the common room, and on the sports' field they mix freely together; and in missionary institutions they meet together in the large Hall for the opening and closing of school with the accompanying acts of Christian worship. In one High School in Madras the writer took a photograph of twenty-five boys of as many different castes sitting together. In North India he came across a case in which the students

still met caste rules by having separate cook-houses, *but they had the dividing walls only a foot high !*

Equally important are the signs of a change of attitude towards the outcastes. Undoubtedly, during the last few years, there have been political motives to account largely for this ; but it cannot be denied that not a few enlightened Indians have qualms of conscience about the age-long treatment of these unfortunate people, and there is a tendency to regard them as humble brethren in need of assistance. In not a few High Schools and Colleges the students, on their own initiative, have formed Social Service Guilds to study the problems of outcaste life—housing, sanitation, and education—and examples are not wanting of young caste students, and in some cases even Brahmins, going among the “untouchables” and rendering really noble service. It is an undeniable fact that there is more such service organized from Christian schools than from any others. The careful study of the Gospels as class books is not without effect on the lives of the youth of India. “I am not a Christian,” wrote a gifted Hindu, “but this I say : the more Christ-like we become, the better for us and for our land ; and towards securing this happy end nothing can be more effective than the practice of placing before the minds of our students daily the ideal of love, self-abnegation, and suffering for others’ sake that is presented to us in the pages of the Gospels. . . . Half an hour’s study of the Bible will do more to remodel a man than a whole day spent in the study of the Puranas.”

#### The Rise of Nationalism

Another result of higher education in India has been the rise and development of Nationalism. When Schwartz and Carey, Duff and Ram Mohan Roy, began their

evangelistic and educational work, they were introducing forces that were bound to effect mighty changes in the ancient civilizations of India. The more enlightened Governor-Generals in the days of "the Company," and statesmen like Lord Macaulay, sympathized with and assisted in the task of giving education and Christianity to the Indian people; and when Company rule ended, and the British Government assumed responsibility for that great land, it was laid down as a guiding principle that the Indian people were to be educated and prepared and encouraged gradually to take their proper part in the government of their country. For many years the whole policy has led slowly—perhaps 'too slowly—in this direction. Indian gentlemen have come more and more into prominent positions as magistrates, judges, or district officials: Municipal Boards have been formed,—composed largely of Indians—and Indians were appointed to the Viceroy's Council, to the Government of India, and to the India Office in London; and in 1920 Lord Sinha was appointed Governor of Behar—the first Indian to become chief administrator of an important province.

But to many Indians the wheels of state seemed to move too slowly along the road of progress. And this feeling was strengthened by Japan's victory over Russia in 1904. All Asia was shaken out of slumber by that momentous event. If little Japan could become so strong, why not great China—and India? The Swadesi (Own Country) Movement was born, and such slogans as "India a Nation" and "India for the Indian" were heard. Some talked about turning the British out—bag and baggage—but more thoughtful Indians asked for Home Rule within the Empire.

Then came the great European War of 1914-18. It.

created a new relationship between India and Great Britain; hopes ran high that the war services rendered by India would receive immediate recognition. Everything pointed to the speedy granting of a very large measure of self-government to India, and this was strengthened by the fact that she was specially represented at the great Peace Conference at Versailles, and on the League of Nations. President Wilson's new international ideal of "Self-determination" was readily accepted by the British Government, and it naturally created large expectations in India. All the great peoples of Asia and Africa, as well as the smaller states of Europe, tingled with new life and expectation; a tidal wave of Nationalism swept round the world, and hardly a country escaped its force. Indians, like other people, demanded the right of "self-expression"; their feelings were accentuated by such grievances as the treatment of Indians in South and East Africa, and they grew impatient at the inevitable delays in carrying out Britain's clearly expressed intention.

Happily, plans for a larger measure of self-government than the Indian people had ever known were well in hand: in December 1919 an Act passed through the British Parliament establishing elective Provincial Councils and Assemblies, and, in December 1920, India held the first General Election in her long history. A new era was inaugurated.

Unfortunately, while the arrangements for this constitution were being made, events conspired to wound India's self-esteem and stir up feeling to a flame of passion. High prices, food scarcity, recurring famines and epidemics, produced serious unrest among the masses. Indian Moslems were disturbed over the Allied peace terms to Turkey and the curtailment of the power of

the Sultan—the supreme spiritual head of Islam. Even more serious were the most lamentable disturbances at Amritsar, in the Punjab (April 1919). After several days of rioting, during which excesses had been committed, a crowd of some ten thousand Indians, who had gathered in a place where a meeting had been prohibited, were, without warning to disperse, fired upon for ten minutes by a small company of troops. About 380 people were killed, and probably three times that number wounded. The action was condemned by Lord Hunter's Committee of Investigation as being "inhuman and un-British" and as causing "great disservice to British rule in India." The continuing to fire after the crowd had begun to disperse was described by the Government of India as "indefensible" and "greatly exceeding the necessity of the occasion," and as having, "undoubtedly left behind bitterness of feeling which will take long to pass away." These unhappy events united both Hindus and Moslems in common cause against the Government.

### **Mr Gandhi and Non-Co-operation**

The situation now brought to the forefront a very remarkable Nationalist leader—Mr M. K. Gandhi, a Hindu lawyer, educated in England and called to the Bar at the Inner Temple. A man of irreproachable character and ascetic habits, he at once captivated the imagination of India. Intensely earnest and very sincere, he is an idealist, a visionary, with an extraordinary tendency to overlook the realities of life. By the more extreme Nationalists, he was hailed as the deliverer of the land and regarded as almost more than mortal. He has steadily increased in power until he occupies a position unique in India. To understand Mr Gandhi's influence, it,

is necessary to remember that it rests primarily, not on his position as a statesman or as a political leader, but upon the veneration which has sprung up around his person in the minds of all classes of Indians.

The main instrument of Mr Gandhi's policy is what has come to be known as "Non-Co-operation." Its aim is to make government impossible. Convinced that force would be futile and wicked, he has urged passive resistance: "Do not resort to violence. Simply refuse to co-operate with the Government. Have nothing to do with the British." He called upon lawyers to refuse to plead, upon all classes to take no cases to the courts, and upon students to come out of the colleges. All British goods were to be boycotted, and Indians possessing British titles and decorations were to return them to Government. At the General Election, the people were to refrain from voting and have nothing to do with the new constitution. Another of Mr Gandhi's instruments has been the proclamation of *Hartals* (Days of Mourning)—as, for example, on the occasion of the visits of the Duke of Connaught and the Prince of Wales—the people being ordered to close their shops and refrain from joining in the welcome and the festivities.

Mr Gandhi's true aims and methods were not understood by the ignorant and superstitious lower classes and the villagers; to them, opposition to Government meant violence. As a result, riots, outrages, and murders occurred in many parts of the country. Political capital was made out of the economic and industrial distress, and the situation became increasingly serious. Then, in March 1922, Mr Gandhi was arrested, and sentenced to six years' penal servitude without hard labour.

What the ultimate outcome will be, it is beyond the power of mortal man to predict. It remains for all

Christian people to seek to reach a sympathetic understanding of the aspirations of India, and to recognize that India must herself make a full contribution to the solution of her own problems.

That India has a great future before her cannot be doubted by those who know anything of her past achievements and her present possibilities. But probably her greatest contribution to the general life of mankind will be in the realm of religion. Indians are the most religious people in the world; they supremely believe that "the things that are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal." Her greatest men have been not monarchs or military leaders, but religious thinkers, and her most important achievements have been in the realm of religion. Bishop Westcott used to say that India is the St John of the nations, and that we shall never have a satisfactory commentary on St John's Gospel until an Indian Christian writes one. We look forward to the day when India will find in Christ the fulfilment of all her aspirations. When she focuses upon Jesus all her hereditary religious instincts she will be able to give to the world such an interpretation of the Gospel as it has never yet had, thereby enriching the spiritual experience of all nations.

# BOOKS ON INDIA

## A FOR FURTHER READING

## B TEACHING MATERIAL

NOTE.—Where U.C.M.E. (United Council for Missionary Education) is given as the publisher, the books can be obtained from any of the Missionary Societies (see addresses facing p. 7).

### A

Those who desire to read more about some phase of Indian life may consult the following books:

#### Indian History, etc.

*A Brief History of the Indian Peoples.* Sir W. W. Hunter (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 4/-).

*The Ancient Church and Modern India.* Godfrey Phillips (Student Christian Movement. 2/6).

#### Social Conditions

*Social Ideals in India.* William Paton (U.C.M.E. 1/3).

*Social Problems and the East.* Frank Lenwood (U.C.M.E. 2/6).

*Women Workers of the Orient.* Margaret E. Burton (U.C.M.E. 2/6).

*The Indian Child's Mother.* By A. D. (Church Missionary Society. 3/6).

#### Outcastes

*The Outcastes' Hope.* Godfrey E. Phillips (U.C.M.E. 2/-).

#### Education

*The Renaissance in India.* C. F. Andrews (U.C.M.E. 1/6).

*Village Education in India.* (All Missionary Societies. 2/6).

#### Hinduism

*The Crown of Hinduism.* J. N. Farquhar (Oxford Univ. Press. 6/-).

*The Renaissance in India* (Ch. III). C. F. Andrews (U.C.M.E. 1/6).

*The Goal of India* (Chs. II and III). W. E. S. Holland (U.C.M.E. 2/6).

*Jesus Christ and the World's Religions* (Ch. III). William Paton (U.C.M.E. 1/-).

#### Mohammedanism

*The Rebuke of Islam.* W. H. T. Gairdner (U.C.M.E. 3/-).

*The Story of Islam.* T. R. W. Lunt (U.C.M.E. 3/-).

*Jesus Christ and the World's Religions* (Ch. II). William Paton (U.C.M.E. 1/-).

#### Missionary Work and Problems

*The Goal of India.* W. E. S. Holland (U.C.M.E. 2/6).

*The Renaissance in India* (Chs. VI & VIII). C. F. Andrews (U.C.M.E. 1/6).

Also the Reports, Magazines, and books published by the various Missionary Societies.



**Nationalism**

*The Highway of God* (Ch. I). K. Harnett and W. Paton (U.C.M.E. 2/6).  
*Indian Nationalism*. Edwyn Bevan (Macmillan & Co. O.P.).

**B**

The following is a list of graded missionary textbooks on India for Sunday School teachers and other workers among young people. The books will also be found useful by teachers in day schools as supplementary material for geography and history lessons, etc.

**For Workers among Boys and Girls, aged 9-13**

*Talks on India's Girls and Boys*. Dorothy Ackland (U.C.M.E. 1/-).  
*Talks on Medical Work in India and China*. Lilian Cox (U.C.M.E. 1/-).

**For Workers among Boys, aged from 12-16**

*Yarns on Heroes of India*. J. Claverdon Wood (U.C.M.E. 1/-).  
*Yarns on Brothers of all the World* (Yarns 6 and 7). A. P. Shepherd (U.C.M.E. 1/-).  
*Yarns on Heroes of the Lone Trail* (Yarns 3 and 5). A. P. Shepherd (U.C.M.E. 1/-).

**For Workers among Girls, aged from 14-18**

*Heroines of India*. Edith A. Williams (U.C.M.E. 9d.).  
*Heroines of Healing* (Ramabai and Mary Reed). Constance E. Padwick (U.C.M.E. 1/-).

**For Teachers of Girls and Boys from 12-15 years of age**

*Four Lessons on Dr Pennell of Bannu*. May Ollis Pelton (All Missionary Societies. 2d.).

**For Children, aged 6-8**

*The Book of an Indian Baby*. Mary Entwistle (U.C.M.E. 1/6).  
 With illustrations in two colours. [Ready October 1922.]

**A Gift Book for Children, aged 4-8**

*The Birthday Book of Baku*. Amy Steedman (U.C.M.E. 2/-).  
 With illustrations in two colours.

**For Boys and Girls, aged 8-12**

Post-card Painting Book—*Children of India*. Elsie Anna Wood (U.C.M.E. 1/6). [Ready October 1922.]

**Outline Map of India**

On stout brown paper; size 26 x 19 ins. (U.C.M.E. 6d.).

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